

## **A Process Theory of Responsible Leadership**

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# **A Process Theory of Responsible Leadership**

Mark Andrew Ellis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2020

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1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
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## Abstract

Modern capitalism is a success for some, but not for all. The examples of the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, Nike's sweatshops and the demise of Enron and Arthur Anderson show how irresponsible leaders prioritise corporate needs and profit ahead of society's wider interests. As a result, there is an increasing interest in higher purpose forms of leadership such as Responsible Leadership (RL) with its concern for the wider stakeholder community and ethically informed governance and management decision making.

This thesis presents new empirical findings from an inductive thematic analysis of Responsible Leadership as practiced within seven organisations. The findings and subsequent conclusions were developed from a cross case analysis of twenty one interviews with the responsible leaders and their organisations' stakeholders.

A process theory of responsible leadership was developed from the findings. This process details the journey of the RL participants from their early life to establishing and then growing their organisation whose primary aim was social betterment. The participant RLs studied came to responsible leadership as a result of experiences in their formative years where they had become sensitive to the plight of others less fortunate than themselves. This ultimately led to their activation in creating an organisation with the explicit aim of improving the lives of these individuals/communities.

The interpretations of the constituent themes of what it is to be a responsible leader indicate that the personal moral values (e.g. universalism and benevolence) of each of the RLs studied were the cornerstone of why they had become a RL and that these values prioritised social concerns above profit. These personal values also underpinned the aims and mission of their organisation and their leadership approach. It is this personal value set that the RLs recruited employees against and where they were not present actively excluded applicants, presenting as a dichotomy with the RL espoused values of inclusivity. Other findings that emerged from the study include an emergent theory of responsible leadership that differentiates it from responsible management and further insights into the boundary of RL stakeholder inclusion.

This study also expands our understanding of responsible leadership, provides insights for practice and suggests productive avenues for further investigation.

## Acknowledgment

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# 1 Introduction

Within the leadership literature and within society there is a growing interest in, and growing call for, responsible leadership (RL) (Waldman & Siegel, 2008). The very public business failures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, the Bhopal disaster for Union Carbide, Shell's Brent Spar disaster, Nike's sweatshops and the demise of Enron and Arthur Anderson (Pless & Maak, 2011) linked with questionable ethics and governance practices have brought into question many of the assumptions about the boundaries of a business's responsibility (Doh, Stumpf, & Tymon, 2011). Indeed 'A society of markets, laws, and elections is not enough if the rich and powerful fail to behave with respect, honesty, and compassion toward the rest of society and toward the world' (Sachs, 2011, p. 3).

These failures have fuelled a growing demand from stakeholders that businesses and their leaders take active roles in fostering responsible behaviour and ethical business practices (e.g. triple bottom line values) (Maak, 2007) as good and responsible citizens. This call for business leaders to act responsibly (Chin, Hambrick, & Treviño, 2013), as corporate citizens (Matten & Crane, 2005) that engage with stakeholders (Scherer, Palazzo, & Baumann, 2006) reflects 'the new political role of business in a globalized world' (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011, p. 899).

The global financial collapse of 2008 was largely as a result of irresponsible business leadership (Pless & Maak, 2011) and the potential for this to occur was supported by growing gaps in governance in neo-liberal governments where the decline in nation-state regulatory powers failed to guarantee stable economic conditions (Habermas, 2001; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Scherer et al., 2006). Simultaneously these same governments have privatised many public services (e.g. education, health care and water) (Crouch, 2009) which can only lead to a blurring of boundaries between business, government and society (Mäkinen & Kourula, 2012). However, is it unrealistic and impractical to expect business leaders to be responsible for all of the challenges facing society (Pless & Maak, 2011)? Should they recognise their co-responsibility within the world and be more than the shareholders' agent? Beyond legislative requirements wider responsibilities are discretionary and are often ethical domains that link business in a psychological

contract with society (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The fine balance of responding to these societal responsibilities and leading a successful business in a capitalist economy demonstrates the challenges and complexity of responsible leadership (Henriques & Richardson, 2013).

It is important to recognise that RL is not just a mechanism for doing 'good' and supporting the wider stakeholder community. It can also support business effectiveness. This is demonstrable in Doh, Stumpf and Tymon's (2011) significant study of 28 global organisations (with 4352 employees) where they demonstrated that without a responsible leadership approach to HR, organisations suffered a much higher turnover of staff, challenging the long-term viability of the businesses (Barney, 1991; Colbert, 2004). The growing demand for RL, born of environmental, societal and economic issues, creates an opportunity to undertake detailed research that theorises and deepens our understanding of what RL is. RL is a significantly under researched area of leadership (Pless & Maak, 2011) with little agreement on interpretations and theory (Miska, Hilbe, & Mayer, 2014). Waldman (2011a) suggests the research to support this needs to be of a descriptive nature grounded in data from which a normative theory can be developed, whilst simultaneously researchers need to be mindful of the influence of their own ideologies so that this does not drive the research (ibid).

Beyond the literature, the author also has extensive experience in witnessing RL in the business world having supported several hundred organisations over a significant period (20+ years as senior manager and business consultant). This business support was primarily in a consultative role and as a result was almost exclusively with the leadership teams of those organisations supported. This professional experience suggested to the author that RL was diverse but also had commonality of themes. These were that responsible leaders genuinely valued the wider stakeholder community and their interests and that this was not through a sense of obligation but of a genuine concern for others and the impact their organisation could and should have upon them. This often came across as an internalised personal value of the leader where being responsible did not stop where it was inconvenient but was guided by a deontology of what felt to be morally right. Thus, stakeholders were valued in their own right and not as a means to achieving

the leader's personal ambition, very much aligned with Kant's Categorical Imperative. Throughout his career (and life) the author recognises that this approach to leadership is very much aligned with his own internalised values and leadership approach and is the key motivation for his interest in exploring and furthering the knowledge base of this field.

The political, social and economic contexts contribute to how organisational leadership is practised, it is incumbent upon the leader to make sense of their environment in order to make positive performance driven decisions for the organisation (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988; Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). The competitive market place is fundamental to capitalist economies (Desmet, Hoogervorst, & Van Dijke, 2015) and it is this context that is explored briefly in the following section.

## **1.1 Socio-Political Environmental Context**

The responsible leadership literature suggests that RL is a relatively new concept born of the current challenges and failures of modern capitalism (Maak & Pless, 2006a). However Adam Smith's (2010) [1776] eighteenth century proposals indicating that the pursuit of mutually beneficial trade is in everyone's best interest, is well aligned with our current understanding of RL. Has a deviation occurred from Smith's initial concept of capitalism? Or is it, as Waldman (2011b) suggests, that RL has been marginalised as it is not a natural bedfellow of capitalism? With this dichotomy, RL needs to be understood in the context of capitalism and its inherent contradictions and failures (Harvey, 2011).

Adam Smith's (1991) economic principles of the perfect market being able to distribute scarce resources in an efficient way, via the 'invisible hand' of the market place, is widely accepted as an underlying principle of a capitalist economy. However, this is perhaps overly simplistic and ignores some key factors such as no market being perfectly competitive (Baumol & Blackman, 1991) and the fact that western economies are not free markets as they have legislation, regulation and laws that govern trade. Also the principle of allocation of resources via self-interested individuals essentially renders the market place inimical to ethics and RL

(Pitelis, 2002). Indeed, Sen (1999) argues that Adam Smith has been interpreted too narrowly, particularly around the principle of people's self-interest being the basis for economic efficiency. Sen indicates that Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' placed people as individuals in a community and that they should put the community first, 'to the interest of this great community, he [sic] ought at all times to be willing that his own little interests should be sacrificed' (Sen, 1999, p. 23). Sen also calls into question the current focus solely on the 'engineering' approach to economics and the narrowly held view of self-interested human behaviour. Barker (1958) points out that self-interest was not the origins of economics as defined by Aristotle, where economics was concerned with both ethics and politics and how these fields, as a role of the state, can lead to the 'common promotion of a good quality of life'. Aristotle also argued against trading for profit, differentiating 'economics' (wise allocation of resources for a good life) from 'chrematistics' (the pursuit of money for its own sake).

Returning to Smith (2010)[1759], his Theory of Moral Sentiments clearly indicates that the 'good agreement' of colleagues, trader partners and others is an advantage to all. Demonstrating that this cooperative approach is not a recent issue, Sorley's (1906) key point is that our motives are complex and not just limited to aspects of economics; we may be wealth seeking but also much more (Sorley, 1906). More recently, Vranceanu (2005) indicates that there is strong focus on the neoclassical aspects of economics within education and government and that this focuses on the machine like aspects of economics (perhaps due to its development alongside the industrial revolution), he suggest that for economics to move forward it must consider ethical perspectives and that this is the challenge with which we are now faced. Vranceanu points out that this does not need to be an exception to capitalism, but this incorporation of ethics could be an evolution of capitalism. This aligns with more recent thinking and the Bank of England's aspirations for 'Inclusive Capitalism' and the need for businesses to support the building of social capital (Carney, 2014).

However, can we be sure that inequality is not in the best interests of society? The majority may not wish for it but this in itself does not mean equality will prove to be an improvement on the status quo. Providing a response to this

question is Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) analysis of a significant evidence base which shows that inequality is in no one's best interests and even in affluent nations of the west, where inequality is present, both rich and poor alike have a lesser quality of life (e.g. aspects of health and social issues) that is directly proportionate to the level of inequality. Rawls (2009) makes a strong proposal for equity with his 'veil of ignorance' where, if ignorant of the social position we were to be born to, we would seek an equitable solution that favoured those less well off.

This compelling body of thought suggests that traditional capitalism (where those with capital engage in private ownership of the means of production that enables the accumulation of more capital (Reisman, 1998)) needs to evolve and become significantly more egalitarian. The inherent instabilities and contradictions of capitalism are no longer tolerable if democratic nations aspire to progress (Harvey, 2011).

This potential for a changing tide of capitalism is a powerful driver for us to understand RL and what it is in practice. Understanding the effect RL has on organisations could reveal behaviours that are economically effective, sustainable and socially preferred in leading organisations.

## **1.2 Research Question and Objectives**

This thesis expands the current research base on RL and proposes a theory of RL based on the processes observed and insights derived by the researcher from the data collected. The research approach was a general inductive thematic analysis (Thomas, 2006) applied across seven purposively selected organisations and their leaders; as such the process/theory proposed is not empirically generalisable. However, as is demonstrated within this thesis, the main aspects of this process of RL were consistent across all participants indicating a degree of theoretical generalisability, within this there were several new and original insights into responsible leadership. This proposed process of RL responds to the core research question: What is Responsible Leadership in Practice? And the stated research aim: To explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership.

Beyond the process of RL proposed, other findings were apparent and are proposed as further insights into the dimensions of RL. These are linked directly to the research objectives (below) that underpin the research aim:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for (the who dimension)
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension)
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)

### **1.3 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is presented across seven chapters. Chapter one gives an overview of the whole thesis and each of the constituent chapters, it also provides a robust rationale and demonstrable need for the research undertaken and highlights the growing scholastic interest in the study of RL. Chapter one also details the motivations of the researcher in undertaking this study and the specific research question and underpinning research objectives for the project.

Chapter two reviews the RL literature and other associated leadership theories. The associated theories include those theories indicated to be forms of higher purpose leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2011) or are leadership theories implicated as relevant within the RL literature itself. This approach serves to narrow the broader field of leadership literature reviewed so as to be relevant and create focus that supports the achievement of the research project's stated aim: to explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership. As a narrative review, it supports the principles of an inductive research approach and thus is wide ranging (within the focus indicated above) so as to develop an understanding of RL within the relevant context (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Chapter three details the research methods and philosophy applied. It justifies and describes in detail the approach taken and lists the main research

question, aim and objectives (as indicated above). The application of the general inductive thematic analysis selected (Thomas, 2006) is described in full along with a discussion of the researcher's philosophy of pragmatism (Rorty, 1999) and how this is applied within the project and research approach. Within the description, examples of analytical records are included highlighting the process of analysis and how key findings were arrived at. Research ethics, reflexivity, participant selection and consent are also discussed in chapter three.

Chapter four and five present the key findings from the research project. The findings from investigating the four dimensions (research objectives) are presented in two chapters, where they break down into two constituent themes. This first of these two chapter covers aspects of what brought the leaders to becoming a RL and covers the dimensions of why, who and what and essentially tells the story of how the RLs came to responsible leadership. The second of the two findings chapters explores the how dimension of RL and includes content demonstrating what it is to be a responsible leader in practice. An overview of the participants and their host organisations is detailed at the beginning of chapter four. Within these chapters, and across the whole thesis, the twenty two participants involved in the project have been give pseudonyms as have the seven organisations from which they were drawn.

Chapter six is a discussion chapter and integrates the empirical evidence with the existing theories of leadership and RL. This chapter takes those findings and explores them in depth within the four research objectives (dimensions of responsible leadership) as this gives a suitable framework from which to further analyse, communicate and understand the nature of responsible leadership within the cohort studied. This chapter demonstrates that RLs are individuals who take on a personal mission of social betterment to improve inequality or suffering that they have been exposed to in their formative years.

Chapter seven presents the original and key contributions to the existing knowledge base of RL. Essentially this is a response to the main research question, aim and objectives and is a proposal of a process of RL as is derived through the researcher's interpretation of the empirical data. Within this chapter, the author demonstrates that this analysis of RL is original as no prior study has explored RL as a



process, determining the antecedents that creates a RL through to understanding how RLs express this in their leadership practice and approach. Chapter seven also responds to cited knowledge gaps within the extant literature and creates further insight into areas of disparity within the literature, this chapter also differentiates Responsible Management from Responsible Leadership as interpreted from the data collected. Recommendations for further research are also made.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the extant RL literature and other relevant leadership theories. With such a significant volume of generic leadership literature where ‘there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it’ Stodgill (1974, p. 7), included in this review are those theories labelled as responsible leadership and other theories indicated to be forms of higher purpose leadership (Jackson & Parry, 2011) or implicated as relevant within the RL literature itself. This approach narrows the broader field of leadership literature reviewed so as to be relevant and create focus that will support the achievement of the research project aim: to explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership. The review’s focus of RL and other higher purpose leadership theories also allows this study to be placed within the context of previous studies and demonstrates how the research aim (above) and objectives were drawn from the current body of knowledge.

This literature review explores how responsible leadership is understood in the existing literature and identifies themes and gaps. As a narrative review, it supports the principles of an inductive research approach and thus is wide ranging (within the focus indicated above) so as to develop an understanding of RL within the relevant context (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This approach facilitated sensemaking within the researcher and uncovered the implicit stories of RLs and their practice within the literature (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). This deeper understanding and sensitisation in the researcher increased the likelihood of discovering new and original knowledge of RL in practice, thus contributing to the current literature and achieving the project’s aim.

The two foci of higher purpose leadership and responsible leadership are presented in separate sections below with a final conclusive section drawing the key points together.

## 2.2 Higher purpose leadership

This section of the literature review focuses on leadership theories linked with higher purpose, where leadership theories related to, but not labelled as, responsible leadership are reviewed. These theories are explored, compared and contrasted with responsible leadership, where RL is interpreted as leadership that is concerned for the wider stakeholder community (beyond employees, suppliers and customers) and applies moral reasoning in its purpose, governance and leadership decision-making (Maak & Pless, 2006b). This approach provides an insight into the more generic leadership theories that are linked with RL related leadership thinking, supporting a deeper understanding of the interrelation and crossover of these theories.

Leadership is ubiquitous in society where it is often perceived as a force for good that will lead to success. Leaders are seen as rare and hold privileged places in the workplace and society (Western, 2019). However why is this the case? What has led to the dominance of these individuals in people's everyday lives? Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (2006)[1844] gives some insight where he expressed a view that mankind came together for safety in numbers in a time where all mankind was at war with one another. However, the people soon realised that within this social structure they needed to give up certain freedoms. They could no longer simply do as they pleased regardless of concern for others. Thus, the members of the population gave up their independence so as to receive safety and created a sovereign power responsible for the safety of all. The people became subjects to the sovereign leader they created where they deferred responsibility to another for an aspect of their being. Within Hobbes's allegory, sovereign leadership is born with the implicit demand for an individual or group to emerge and take up this post of leader and to uphold the inherent responsibilities of this post. Within this situation, one could readily see the emergence of individuals with an aspiration and/or aptitude toward leadership. The situation has demanded a leader so one emerges. However, Hobbes's implicit demand for leaders to be responsible (as it is the populace who have created them to be responsible for their shared interests) is open to corruption where there is lack of governance or oversight. Where individuals

prioritise their own interests over their followers and their primary purpose in leading is self-interest, the potential for irresponsible leadership is also present. Where leaders address their responsibilities in a socially acceptable manner with their primary purpose being the greater/shared good, we might assume an element of responsible leadership. This would indicate leader purpose as a primary concern for stakeholders and that the original concept of leadership held an implicit demand for responsible leadership.

Purpose in leadership is fundamental and, where that purpose is a concern for others, it is rooted in altruism. This becomes leadership that goes beyond immediate financial and stakeholder concerns and is demonstrable in a range of leadership theories including transformational, servant, authentic, ethical (Jackson & Parry, 2011) collective, distributive, eco-leadership, spiritual and values based (Western, 2013) which together can be grouped as 'leading with higher purpose' (notwithstanding RL which is discussed at length in the following dedicated section). It is these higher purpose leadership theories (frequently cited and discussed in the RL literature) and their interrelation with RL that are reviewed in this section.

### **2.2.1 Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) proposed that leadership could be transactional or transformational. He indicated that a transactional leader's focus was on a series of exchanges or transactions with followers where reward was given for service rendered and that this was ordinarily within the construct of an organisational hierarchy.

Transformational leadership, however, does not rely on a hierarchy but is more about forming relationships that foster trust and commitment and inspires followers toward achievement of a vision or goal. The transformational leader engages with their followers in a meaningful way that goes beyond task related transactions (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002).

Kotter (1990) and Bennis and Nanus (1985) proposed that transactional leadership was suited to stable business and economic environments where control and order are the focus of the day. In contrast, transformational leader approaches were more suited to fast-paced dynamic environments where adaptability and innovation were linked with high performance and success. Although the two

approaches described are polarised in their approaches, Bass (1985) indicates the two as either end of a continuum and not an 'either-or' proposition.

With its focus on genuine staff engagement (Storey, 2004), transformational leadership has links with RL where both approaches seek stakeholder engagement beyond a transaction or superficial consultation (Voegtlin, 2011). Recent studies also indicate that staff engagement, performance and satisfaction are positively impacted where transformation leadership is practiced (Northouse, 2015; Yukl, 2013). However, where RL has a focus on the wider stakeholder community and contextual factors (e.g. environmental issues, supplier concerns and employee familial concerns) (Maak & Pless, 2006a) 'transformational leadership does not discuss leadership in the context of contemporary stakeholder theory' (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 200) and is primarily concerned with the success of the organisation with little or no interest in societal needs (Maak & Pless, 2006a; Waldman & Galvin, 2008). It would seem that RL and transformational leaders have a keen interest in supporting and enabling staff and that RL expands this interest to include the wider stakeholder community and does so for the broader social interest. With this in mind, one could challenge the principle of transformational leadership as leading with higher purpose as the purpose of this approach would seem to be business success in financial terms. Tourish (2013) also suggests that transformational leaders can become seduced by the power of their position and where once they may have been responsible and ethically informed they can become dysfunctional and toxic, born of their own hubris and arrogance.

However, within the spectrum of transformational leadership, Jung, Chow and Wu (2003) suggest that transformational leaders nurture people through change and move employees to transcend their own self-interest to prioritise others. This approach was seen to engender a culture of inclusion and openness in which staff were empowered to be themselves and try new things, possibly showing links with authentic leadership (discussed later). Perhaps the benefits of transformational leadership lie in the balance of what is good for the organisation and what is simultaneously good for the employees and thus if, well practiced, it becomes a win-win scenario. Consequently, the purpose of transformational leadership could be to equally prioritise employee wellbeing and organisation success, indicating a potential

for leading with higher purpose. Thus transformational leaders have the potential to be responsible leaders where they have a genuine focus on employee wellbeing and consider the wider stakeholder community.

### **2.2.2 Servant Leadership**

Supporting, nurturing and meeting the needs of followers to enable them to reach their full potential and prioritising this above their own needs is the approach of servant leaders, as proposed by Greenleaf (1970). With its concern for social responsibility (Ehrhart, 2004), servant leadership has a significant parallel with RL through a shared concern for the broader range of stakeholders. RL and servant leadership are both concerned with the leader's constituencies (followers or stakeholders) where positive outcomes for others are the aspiration (Greenleaf, 1998; Pless & Maak, 2011). Servant leadership turns upside down the traditional approach of top down leadership and thus is about responding, in a socially responsible way, to the needs of the organisation and its broader group of stakeholders (e.g. employees and society at large) (Pless & Maak, 2011). Important to note is that although RL and servant leadership prioritise others above self-interest, they do not pursue 'self-sacrificial servanthood' where they might prioritise others regardless of personal cost (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008, p. 405).

Context as antecedents is important for servant leadership, where organisational culture that is already pre-disposed to caring (e.g. health care, third sector) is more likely to demonstrate servant leadership associated behaviours. Equally, leader attributes and their personal disposition can influence their capacity for servant leadership, where some people are driven to lead autocratically whilst others may be driven by a higher calling (Sendjaya et al., 2008). As a result, the leader's disposition can influence how they might practice servant leadership. Beyond this it is also important to consider the receptivity of the followers. Studies have shown that not all followers respond positively to servant leaders and some see this as micro management and are not interested in fostering a closer relationship with their manager (Liden et al., 2008). However, if the conditions are well suited to servant leadership (e.g. culture, leader disposition and follower receptivity), it is

likely to generate positive outcomes for the individuals, the organisation and society (Northouse, 2015).

With its prioritisation of others before the leader and concern for the wider stakeholder community there are many similarities between servant leadership and RL. Elements of servant leadership may be identifiable within this study, particularly where context is a function of successful servant leadership, as this study will focus on organisations that have RLs (as discussed in the methodology chapter) they are likely to be considerate toward the broader stakeholder community.

### **2.2.3 Authentic Leadership**

Luthans et al., (2006) see authentic leaders as people concerned to achieve positive outcomes and who are true to who they are. Avolio, Luthans and Walumbwa (2004, p. 802) define authentic leaders as 'persons who have achieved high levels of authenticity in that they know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others'. Authentic leadership centres on individual processes that align values with actions that facilitate staff development and engagement. Avolio et al (2004) and May et al. (2003) see ethics as an inherent aspect of authentic leadership. However, this view is not consistent amongst the academic community where Cooper et al. (2005) and Sparrowe (2005) challenge ethics and morals as defining terms for authentic leadership as they broaden the construct too much and lack clarification within that which has been published.

George (2003) views authentic leadership as a developmental process for the leader concerned and that they become increasingly purposeful, values centred, relational, self-disciplined and compassionate as they develop their authentic approach. Walumbwa et al., (2008) also see authentic leadership as a developmental process, they indicate self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency as the main facets of an authentic leader and that the development of these is life long and can be linked to critical life events.

However, Storberg-Walker and Gardiner (2017) indicate that much academic and practitioner literature fails to acknowledge the complexity of context and identity of authentic leaders, and that those lying outside the 'norms' of these

parameters in an organisation can be destructive (e.g. where a leader is marginalised can they still lead in an authentic manner?) Costas and Fleming (2009) also challenge authentic leadership as a force for good, where they see it as a relational approach and thus, where asymmetry in power relations is present, this approach can become controlling and limit diversity.

RL and authentic leadership overlap in their concern for leader self-awareness and self-regulation (Pless & Maak, 2005). Whereas there is ambiguity as to the ethical dimension of authentic leadership, this is not so for RL where moral awareness, ethical reflection and the application of this in decision making are key features (Werhane & Freeman, 1999).

As with transformational leadership, authentic leadership is concerned with engaging and motivating employees in a meaningful way to nurture them so as to best serve the organisation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). These two approaches similarly differ to RL in that they do not explicitly consider the wider stakeholder community and social need and are concerned primarily with employee fulfilment and shareholder value creation. This does indicate the potential usefulness of identifying authentic leadership within this study. But, as with other forms of leading with higher purpose, it may be that the RLs in this study go beyond this approach with their wider stakeholder concerns.

#### **2.2.4 Ethical Leadership**

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999, p. 182) proposed three facets to the ethics of leadership:

- The moral character of the leader
- The ethical legitimacy of the values within the leader's vision
- The morality of the decision-making processes and subsequent actions

Brown (2005, p. 120) goes further placing this in the leader context where he defines ethical leadership as 'the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making'. The ethical leader is a 'moral manager' in that they not only demonstrate moral conduct but they also seek to imbue this in their subordinates (Brown &



Treviño, 2006). This ethical role modelling and moral management is shared by responsible leaders where both types of leader are seen as moral people who care for their employees, consider the consequences of their actions and engage in discussion with stakeholders affected by ethical problems (Voegtlin, 2011).

Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) indicate three moral facets to ethical leadership (all underpinned by esteemed moral philosophers) as what a leader does (John Stuart Mill – Teleological based ethics), how a leader performs leadership (Aristotle – Virtues based ethics) and why they lead (Emmanuel Kant – Deontological based ethics). This builds on Ciulla's (2005) earlier work where she indicates ethical leaders as those who do the right thing, the right way for the right reasons, thus indicating a significant normative aspect to ethical leadership.

Northouse (2015) suggests that ethics should be considered across the leadership theories as within the main leadership theories only servant, transformational and authentic consider this dimension. Where leaders are influencers, they are guided by their values and as a result these are communicated to followers indicating a need for all leaders to pay attention to and have an awareness of their values and ethical views.

It would seem that there is much interplay with philosophy and personal values within the construct of ethical leadership, this creates a complexity and indeterminate conclusion on what ethical leadership is and how it is interpreted. However, what is apparent is that ethical leaders are those whose conduct can be seen as moral and that this is a manifestation of those with a moral character. RL goes beyond ethical leadership in its broader leader-stakeholder engagement. As with authentic and transformational leadership, current interpretations of ethical leadership sits within the classical leader-follower dyad (Pless & Maak, 2011). As responsible leaders see organisation effectiveness as an outcome of their leadership, but not the driver, it would seem that ethical leaders have a strong focus on this aspect too (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). RLs also recognise the possible tensions of ethical leadership as a means to achieve effectiveness and are subsequently cautious as to its application (ibid). However within this study of purposively selected organisations (selected as those likely to have RLs present, as discussed in the research methods chapter) it is likely that RL morals and values will be used to guide

decision making and it will be of interest to discover how RLs deal with the issues highlighted here.

#### **2.2.5 Collective, Shared and Distributed Leadership**

Collective, shared and distributed leadership are highly similar concepts where multiple individuals are enacting leadership within an organisation. With a focus on a group of individuals coming together to lead, collective leadership moves away from the focus on leader activities' and values to that of the more dynamic functions of leadership (Contractor et al., 2012). Pearce (2004) describes shared leadership as a function where leader members guide each other toward organisational goals. This ideology is a key function of many cooperative business models and is rooted in social exchange-based roles where team members share leadership responsibilities (Hiller, Day, & Vance, 2006). Similarly Jackson et al., (2018) reject a leader centred view as a means to understand leadership within social enterprises. Their critical review investigates and details the wider and shared role of leadership as a socially co-constructed phenomenon of collective leadership. They suggested a more nuanced understanding of collective leadership can be understood through six lenses: person (who has the informal power to create leadership), position (who has the formal power of leadership), process (how is leadership created across communities of people), performance (what is the outcome of leadership), place (where is leadership created in physical space and time) and purpose (why is leadership being created). Thus 'leadership' is co-created across the organisation and this act of creation is on-going and always moving toward a better version of itself, it does not become and remain static.

Mayo, Meindl and Pator's (2003) research mapped collective leadership from a social network perspective indicating a variety of levels of decentralisation of leadership. This ranged from a maximum decentralisation where leadership influence is equal among all members of the collective, to minimal decentralisation where a small handful of individuals share the leader function. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee's (2002) view indicates maximum decentralisation where they describe distributed leadership as every person at entry level, who in one way or another acts as a leader.

Collective leadership is proposed as something of an ideal and for this to be put into practice within an organisation setting is extremely complex and anxiety provoking for those in senior roles (Western, 2013). It does seem difficult to imagine an organisation where leadership decision making is undertaken by everyone. Who then is responsible if strategies fail? If everyone is responsible does that mean in practice no one is responsible? Who reports to shareholders? Does the official leader relinquish power and simply hope all goes well? Added to this is the challenge of deciding what is and what is not leadership within any given function. However, a more minimal decentralisation of leadership function may be more practicable, where roles and responsibilities are decided upon and shared amongst key members. But from another perspective this could readily be a board of directors with their individual portfolios and thus becomes a mainstream hierarchical leadership model. Even if one were to create a new entity with the aspiration of maximum decentralisation of leadership, those that joined after the initial creation would potentially defer aspects of leadership decision making to the founders who would have more knowledge and experience and thus potentially make more informed (and possibly superior) decisions. It would seem the practicalities of collective leadership add a further complex dynamic to the already complex function of leadership. Perhaps Jackson et al's (2018) interpretation of collective leadership as a co-constructed social phenomenon is that which is most closely aligned with what can be seen in practice.

Responsible leaders need to consider collective leadership if they are to truly engage with their stakeholders. To be considerate of the wider stakeholder community as RLs are (Maak, 2007) requires a significant level of engagement with that community. One could argue, what better way to engage staff in the organisation than to involve them in the leadership function at some level? Within social enterprises, it is often the shared interest in the organisational purpose that draws individuals to that organisation (Jackson et al., 2018). However, as is apparent with collective leadership, the challenge is applying the 'right' level of involvement. This would need to be practicable to ensure the organisation can still archive its aims whilst also being authentic and not a superficial gesture to facilitate staff engagement. The challenges indicated above are just as real to organisations with

altruistic intent (as may be led by a RL) as they are to more commercially focused ventures (not that the two are mutually exclusive). This challenge is well exemplified within the cooperative partnership John Lewis that is wholly employee owned and is the UK's largest cooperative (John Lewis, 2019) where all staff are members of the partnership, share profits equitably and are consulted on leadership decisions. Simultaneously they hold a variety of hierarchical roles from sales assistant to managing director, these roles being meritoriously awarded. As a result, it would be hard to accept that those in junior roles held as much leadership sway as their more senior colleagues, however with voting rights and full partner consultations they do have some influence.

It would be reasonable to conclude from this that RLs are likely to engage in an element of shared leadership so as to include their internal stakeholders in a meaningful way. However, the exact nature of the sharing of leadership, in word and in deed, would be difficult to predict due to the complexities highlighted above. However, with knowledge of the challenges and practicalities of shared leadership, identification of the shared leadership phenomenon is relevant to this study.

#### **2.2.6 Eco-leadership**

Eco-leadership is a form of leadership proposed by Simon Western (2019) and is linked with distributed leadership (above) where eco-leaders see themselves as part of a network of organisations that can be conceptualised as a wider eco-system. Thus, eco-led organisations become ecosystems within wider ecosystem, seeing themselves as mutually interdependent and responding to the emergent issues of climate change, sustainability and the failures of capitalism. Western indicates that eco-leadership is not exclusive to environmental leaders but is applicable to all leadership where systematisation allows for distributed leadership that in-turn can facilitate adaptability of organisations to maintain pace with the dynamic conditions of society. Redekop (2010, p. 305) also recognises the emergence of eco-leadership as a move away from the dominant 'industrial paradigm of leadership'. Western (2013) cites four qualities of eco-leadership: connectivity and interdependence (recognising how an interconnected world is transforming our society), systemic ethics (not just espousing ethical practice but acting ethically), leadership spirit

(recognising the need for humanity beyond material gain) and organisational belonging (committing organisations to be an interdependent part of communities). Practitioners such as Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, have championed this approach indicating an aspiration for her organisation to be the catalyst for social and environmental change (Maak & Pless, 2006b). However Roddick went on to sell the Body Shop to L'Oréal for £652M insisting she had not 'sold out' (Guardian, 2006) whilst contradicting her previous criticisms of the corporate beauty retailer who's demonstrable values (e.g. not monitoring suppliers for testing on animals) are at odds with those Roddick espoused for the Body Shop.

One of the challenges for eco-leaders is their tolerance for diversity (with those who do not share their values) and also the need to be persuasive or even coercive in championing their values and approach as those that will sustain humanity into the future (Hanson & Middleton, 2000). How can a leader value diversity within broad communities whilst simultaneously challenging community member's values that are at odds with eco-leadership principles? Also how do eco-leaders rationalise mutually exclusive needs within the wider communities they are integrated with (e.g. where increase of production may create jobs whilst simultaneously creating additional waste)? Can eco-leaders be profit seeking? If so, how can they hope to compete where the additional costs of considering the wider community and global issues are included in their functions, driving up their costs compared to pure profit seeking competitors? With these inherent challenges one could assume that eco-leadership is a normative form of leadership which leaders should aspire to, but it is not wholly practicable.

However, the case of Unilever challenges this assumption. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan has a focus on sustainability, the environment and society interests. The drive from stakeholders such as customers and retailers has created this innovation that has resulted in sustainable growth whilst reducing costs (Guardian, 2012). The CEO Paul Polman (ibid) comments, 'When we look at our supply chain, we think about smallholder farmers, we think about women and employment, we think about land rights, we think about biofuels and because we think about this holistically, our plants are getting better, our sourcing is getting better, these communities have a chance of functioning.' Of course, a positive

speech by a leader does not necessarily mirror that which is actually happening on the ground, indeed marketing 'spin' around sustainability is not uncommon. However, it is clear that the aspirations and culture of Unilever are at some level aligned with eco-leadership.

Eco-leaders can be seen to address some of the similar complex social issues being addressed by RLs. With a strong focus on the wider stakeholder community and with the application of ethical practice being key aspects of RL and eco-leadership there is much alignment.

A significant difference between RLs and eco-leaders would seem to be the systems thinking methodology of eco-systems and the interdependence of stakeholders as a dominate philosophy of eco-leaders, which is not commented upon with RL literature. Western (2013) indicates this systems thinking as a form of distributed leadership where all stakeholders (internal and external) can influence the organisation's approach and activity. As RLs are considerate of the wider stakeholder community perhaps then there is an overlap with RL practice here too. However, where RLs might consider all stakeholders, eco-leaders go even further and seek to engage stakeholders in the leadership function. A further variance between these two forms of leadership would appear to be the 'eco' element of eco-leadership; this is the headline concern for the environment and sustainability. These aspects may well be apparent within RL but do not play such a prominent feature as to be part of the title descriptor. The key focus of RL would seem to be responsibility to the wider stakeholder community and the application of ethical practice, as is explored in more detail in the dedicated section below.

#### **2.2.7 Spiritual Leadership**

Spiritual leadership has a distinct focus on employee well-being and fulfilment and prioritises this over organisational performance (Pfeffer, 2010). Spiritual leaders recognise that followers need work that gives meaning to their lives and that this also contributes to the common good of society (Crossman, 2011). The integration of the body and mind with the heart (linking the physical and logical with emotions) and the spirit is at the core of spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003).

Fry's theory of spiritual leadership (2003) cites calling and membership as universal human needs that can be satisfied through spiritual leadership. Where as a calling facilitates an employee's sense of transcendence from their work that gives meaning and purpose, membership satisfies the human need to be understood and appreciated. Chen and Li (2013, p. 241) support this view where they indicate that spiritual leaders 'share meaningful visions with employees, and show concern for their values and behaviour, the employees feel that their jobs and lives are special and meaningful, resulting in membership'.

The literature (Fairholm, 1996; Fry & Cohen, 2009) also suggest three key behaviours of spiritual leaders. These are, the refusal to compromise on core principles; where shared values and vision are a unifying mechanism employed by spiritual leaders. Stewardship; where employees are encouraged to share power within the organisation so that all are taking responsibility for the common good. The third component is a sense of community; where spiritual leaders will build and maintain positive relationships with and among their employees (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005).

Within the spiritual leadership literature there are apparent links with other forms of leadership, such as the concern for employee fulfilment indicating a link with transformational leadership. Also, not compromising on core values suggests values based, ethical or a moral stance to this form of leadership. These aspects are also apparent within the literature on authentic and servant leadership where integrity and morality feature, as indicated in the previous sections. Where spiritual leaders employ stewardship and thus encourage power sharing across the organisation, this too has links with distributed leadership.

However, there is the potential for spiritual leadership to be coercive and intrusive (Goodier & Eisenberg, 2006). Where the leader espouses and recruits followers to a set of values, what governance of these values is in play, whose moral compass is setting the values and vision of the organisation? Also, where a spiritual leader builds and maintains a sense of community across the organisation, how is diversity considered? Having similar values and beliefs' does not confer a shared view on all things. If it did, this conformity may harm the organisation as diversity can lead to new and novel insights (Amabile, 1996). Indeed, if the requirement

(implicit or explicit) of followers is to think and act in a way as demonstrated by the leader, this lack of tolerance for diversity risks being interpreted as a cult and has the potential for exploitation of followers. Thus, for spiritual leadership to be wielded in a positive way, it is heavily reliant on the internalised values of the leader.

Relating spiritual leadership to responsible leadership there are elements of similarity. That which is most prominent is their values driven approach; RLs values are at the heart of their vision for their organisation and are often their guiding principle for decision making (Freeman & Auster, 2011). RLs also have a concern for the wider stakeholder community and society, and consider these aspects within their leadership of the organisation (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Similarly, spiritual leader's see social benefits as a requirement for follower fulfilment within their work. However, there may not be complete alignment here as the literature suggests the potential for intolerance of diversity in spiritual leaders where they are reluctant to compromise on values (Fry & Cohen, 2009). The RL literature, on the other hand, explicitly indicates a concern for the wider stakeholder community, not simply those with shared interests and values, indicating a higher level of tolerance for diversity. Other points of separation between these two forms of leadership would include the spiritual leader's explicit concern for their follower's wellbeing, as defined by their 'spirit', this assessment of 'spirit' being an internal construct and interpretation by the leader as a mechanism to determine the status of a follower's body, mind and heart. This subtle and perhaps ethereal dimension of spiritual leadership is not apparent in the RL literature.

As can be seen, spiritual leaders build their approach to leadership from their fundamental values and principles. This approach has links with many other interpretations of leadership, including RL and values-based leadership, and it is this view of leadership that is explored in the next section.

#### **2.2.8 Values based Leadership**

As can be seen above, many forms of higher purpose leadership have the leader values as a key constituent of their approach. Where this is the case, it is likely that there are elements of other forms of higher purpose leadership within values based leadership (VLB). This is so for Brown and Trevino's view (2006) when they indicate



principled leadership, altruism, empowerment and reward as key features to VBL, and that this improves employee attitudes and behaviours. Yamin and Mahasned (2018) also supports this view where they sees VBL as an approach in which the leader has a constant focus on employee needs. This, in turn, leads to employee loyalty toward the organisation. Reilly and Ehlinger (2007, p. 246) define VBL as 'leadership based on foundational moral principles or values', where House and Aditya (1997) and Copeland (2014) also indicate a shared commitment to the ideological values and vision of the leader as a key approach to VBL. Relationships between leader and follower built on shared values are a key construct of VBL (Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011) and permeate the literature. Thus, it would seem the key construct of VBL is that the leader and follower have shared values and that the leader is demonstrable in caring for their followers and that in-turn the followers care for and are loyal to the leader and the organisation. As indicated above, there is much overlap here with the various forms of higher purpose leadership. However, where VBL may differ is that it is perhaps a more simplistic view in that it is centred on two principles - shared values and mutual concern. With this in mind, it is possible that other forms of higher purpose leadership have surpassed VBL and this is why there seems to be a decline in publications and investigations into this theory in recent years.

The two key components of shared values and mutual concern within VBL could be identifiable in the practice of RLs in this study as they too are likely proponents of shared values across organisational employees. RLs are also likely to demonstrate concern for the wider stakeholder community, which by default will include all staff members. Thus we can conclude that the exploration of RLs in this study could implicate them as being values based leaders, however with VBL being a comparatively simplistic view it is likely that RLs will be VBLs and more.

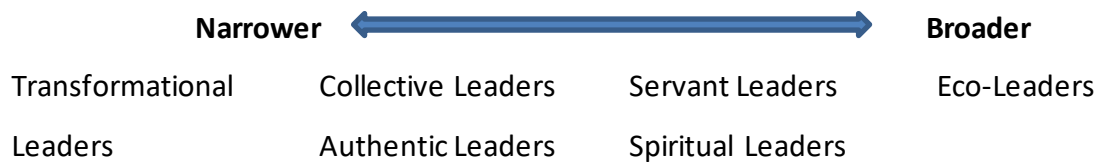
### **2.2.9 Theories of Higher Purpose Leadership Discussion**

This review of the current literature in this field indicates that many of the dimensions of leadership are shared across the theories of higher purpose leadership. Perhaps most prevalent is the leader's application of their values in being a leader. The leadership theories of authentic, ethical, eco and VBL have this

as a dominant narrative, where the leader's morals and values underpin their actions and decision-making and that there is an implicit and/or explicit requirement for followers to share these values. These shared values become the guiding principles of the organisation that unite leader and follower in their common purpose. This unifying ideology may be apparent in the RLs to be studied in this project, where this is the case it will serve to inform their practice of leadership in relation to the various forms of higher purpose leadership. This study will benefit from establishing cases that can inform the (fourth) research objective: identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisations.

Other themes apparent within this literature include the concern for the wider stakeholder community, this was particularly so for servant, spiritual and eco-leadership and is a theme shared with RL. Spiritual, servant and eco-leaders prioritised either followers or the physical environment above the needs of their organisation. They look for shared values in their followers and it was these values that held the wider stakeholder focus. Conversely, the focus of transformational, authentic and collective leadership theories indicates followers or employees to be the primary focus, although within these theories this was linked to organisation success. This perspective creates a distinction within these theories where eco-leaders have a focus on the greater good at a macro level, servant and spiritual leaders prioritise people above the organisation at a local level and transformative, authentic and collective leaders are concerned for followers' well-being where this might be linked to organisation success. One could even interpret transformative leadership as coercive, where there may be 'genuine' staff engagement but only if it leads to organisation success. This comparative analysis could be plotted on a scale of width of stakeholder concern, where eco-leaders might be at one end of the spectrum with their focus on improving society and saving the planet through to transformational leader's focus of organisation success through staff engagement. Toward the centre of this spectrum we could map authentic and collective leadership where they would have wider stakeholder interests than transformative leaders but less wide than spiritual or servant leaders, who in turn have less wide stakeholder concerns than eco-leaders, as indicated below in Fig 2.1:

**Figure 2-1 Stakeholder Width Focus**



This stakeholder width spectrum creates an opportunity to understand RL in relation to the wider higher purpose leadership theories. With the scale above, we might expect to see RL to be on the right hand side as a result of its explicit concern for the wider stakeholder community (this aspect is explored in the following section). Understanding this aspect serves to place RL within the wider leadership literature and is an expressed aspiration for this project linked to the (second) research objective: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for.

Of note within this scale is the absence of both VBL and ethical leadership. This is due to these theories not having an explicit focus on stakeholder engagement. Instead, these theories have a focus on the internalised values of the leader and conceptualise leadership from that perspective. With this in mind, both of these theories could be interpreted as normative theories of leadership, in that leaders ought to be ethical and values based but in reality this is perhaps not always practicable. As discussed above, whose moral compass is used when measuring ethical practice and how can an ethical leader square the circle of mutually exclusive values (e.g. where creating more jobs leads to an increase in waste)? However, as reported in the literature, these leadership theories assume that the values that underpin these approaches are often apparent and shared by followers and that these internalised values are manifest in how the participating RLs practiced leadership. Thus, where RLs demonstrate elements of VBL or ethical leadership this will lead to insights not yet covered in the existing literature. Supporting this exploration and understanding is linked to the (fourth) research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

In concluding this section, it is clear to see that RL sits well within the terrain of higher purpose leadership, largely due to the various dimensions of leadership shared within this set (e.g. values driven, concern for followers and for some the

wider stakeholder community). As a result, one could align a single leader to a range of these theories dependent upon perspective and focus. Where a RL might present as transparent in their practice with their actions and espoused values well aligned, we might label them an authentic leader. Simultaneously with a strong focus on followers we might see them as servant leaders, and where they are operating in a Cooperative, as a collective leader. As a result, given the right circumstances we could attribute several theories of higher purpose leadership to their approach. Understanding this potential for multiple perspectives of leadership will be useful for this project as it sensitises the researcher to this issue and thus can create focus in the findings. It will also prove useful in the analysis, particularly where leaders present as a certain type of leader. The researcher will be able to investigate from this perspective but also be aware that other forms of leadership may also be present. Uncovering these layers will be an important part of the analytical process. This analysis will be particularly relevant to the (fourth) research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

It is also apparent that context can play a significant role, where sectors such as health may attract individuals with an already internalised value around others' well-being and, as a result, communities of shared values could readily form. Within these communities, those with a pre-disposition to leading in a particular way are likely to emerge. Where this occurs within this project it will provide insight into the (first) research objective: Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership.

Building on the above review and adding depth to this study, we can now look more deeply into the current knowledgebase around RL, how it is linked to these forms of higher purpose leadership and how it is linked to the aims and objectives of this project. A review of the current literature on RL is detailed in the following section.

## **2.3 Responsible Leadership Literature Review**

This section of the thesis reviews the current literature around RL and positions how the research aims and objectives (as detailed below) have been developed from this

body of knowledge. The aspiration of this project is to understand RL as it is practised by responsible leaders, as is underpinned by the main research question: What is responsible leadership in practice?

Underpinning this research question is the research aim: To explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership, which in turn is supported by the specific research objectives (below) which will guide the investigation:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation

This section builds on the previous section's review of higher purpose leadership theories and fulfils the recognised aims of a literature review in that it demonstrates an understanding of the path of the current research and how this is linked to this thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This review summarises current trends within the field of RL, provides an interpretation of these and also highlight gaps within the current knowledge base (Dunleavy, 2003).

Within the scope of this project is the intention to form an understanding of RL as a process (as is explored in chapter 3) as indicated within the main research question: What is responsible leadership in practice? It is this notion of 'process' (as a series of actions to achieve an end) that informs the structure of this review where first interpretations of RL are explored followed by aspects of antecedents that leads to RL, then RL as functional practice and finally the outcomes of RL. Collectively this pulls together many of the current studies of RL that independently have focussed more narrowly on a single aspect of this journey such as antecedents, current practice or underpinning ideologies. Detailing the literature review in this way affords the opportunity to explore specific research objectives as they apply to each of the sections. E.g. Reviewing RL Antecedents affords insights into the research (first) objective: Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership. The RL practice section indicates current knowledge linked to the (fourth) objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their

organisation. The final RL outcomes section reviews the literature associated with the (second and third) research objectives: Explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for and Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for. This delineation of RL practice and the RLs journey to becoming a RL will provide insights from which the constituent elements of a process of RL may be apparent. How these various aspects of RL present, along with their interdependencies, will lead to a deeper understanding of RL and serve to inform the main research question: What is Responsible Leadership in practice?

### **2.3.1 Interpretations of Responsible Leadership**

It is reported in the literature that RL does not mean the same thing to everyone (Waldman & Galvin, 2008) which has resulted in a widely recognised lack of agreement on a shared interpretation of RL (Ketola, 2012; Maak & Pless, 2006a; Miska et al., 2014; Pless, 2007). However, this review shows that there are themes within the literature which can be taken as a working or emergent interpretation of RL which informs the analysis of this thesis. Although it is important to recognise that, as an interpretivist approach, this has not necessarily guided the researcher, it nevertheless serves to sensitise him to the current thinking and provides a base for analysis and interpretation.

Ciulla's (1998) work made close links between Ethical Leadership and RL where responsible leaders held ethical principles that were shared with followers and gave common meaning and purpose that went beyond the needs of the organisation. Pless and Maak (2004, p. 137) went on to describe a responsible leader as one who 'creates a common basis of understanding by identifying the common moral grounds'. Doh and Stumpf (2005a) proposed that responsible leadership and governance includes three critical components: (1) values-based leadership; (2) ethical decision-making, and (3) quality stakeholder relationships. This explicit inclusion of and high regard for stakeholders was detailed in Maak and Pless's (2005a) study where they indicated that a concern for the impact upon all stakeholders was clearly indicated as a key aspect of RL. A significant number of authors have echoed this concern for and interaction with the broader stakeholder community, including Garriga and Mele (2004), Felps and Bigley (2007), Waldman

(2011b) and Miska, Hilbe and Mayer (2014). This is where the broader stakeholder community goes beyond the immediate stakeholders (staff, suppliers, customers etc) to include those who might be affected, but not directly linked to, the organisation (e.g. local residents, families of staff, environmental groups and local authority). Laasch and Conaway (2014) see stakeholder management as a core principle of Responsible Management, where the aim of stakeholder management is the creation of value for those who affect or are affected by the organisation, this being achieved through a mechanism of stakeholder assessment and involvement. These interpretations of the broader stakeholder community align with Freeman's (1984, p. 46) definition of stakeholders as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives'. Waldman and Siegel (2008) defined this as the extended stakeholder view and understood this to go beyond pure economic interests and a concern for a limited stakeholder community, simultaneously indicating this limited stakeholder view and prioritising of economic interest as most prevalent in the business world.

Maak and Pless (2006b, p. 99) went on to enhance their definition of RL and indicate two core components as 'social-relational and ethical', the authors contrasted RL with more traditional leadership approaches. This indicates that RL has moved away from the leader-follower paradigm to a leader-stakeholder one where leader self-interest is put aside, all aspects of leadership become inclusive of relevant stakeholders who have a 'stake' in the leadership project. Thus, RL becomes a relational approach where RLs proactively engage others in the process of visioning and decision-making in a socially responsible and authentic way. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) theorise Relational Leadership as responsive, dialogical and morally accountable to others and suggest that this approach can sensitise leaders to a range of occurrences that can reveal new possibilities for responsible leadership. Maak and Pless (ibid) also indicate a clear overlap here with the practice of CSR and its concern for the broader stakeholder community.

Freeman and Auster (2011) identify authentic leadership as a close bedfellow of RL and that this is born of one's personal experience, values and aspirations. They argue that an understanding of RL can be, 'enriched with this more nuanced idea of the self and authenticity' (Freeman & Auster, 2011, p. 315). If one is acting on one's

internalised values (that which is important to us and underpins our motivation and action) then authenticity must certainly feature. However, how do we manage if our values and those of the stakeholders we aim to include are mutually exclusive, whose do we prioritise? Equally, is RL simply a matter of decision making based on one's values or are there other compromises that are needed based on business, stakeholder and other competing needs? This also assumes one truly understands one's values. These complexities add further challenges to the development of a deeper understanding of RL. Freeman and Auster (2011) suggest that the pragmatist philosophy of Richard Rorty (1989) and its focus on the self and community may well enable a revision of the idea of RL. This view is of significant interest to the author where he has identified his own interpretivist values as being sympathetic to the philosophy of Rorty (as explored in chapter three).

Waldman (2011b) highlighted the growing interest in and need for RL in the wake of a number of irresponsible acts committed by leaders of significant organisations (e.g. Shell Brent Spar disaster and Enron collapse). He also recognised the complexity of RL due to its consideration of complex phenomena such as values, behaviours and decision making and that multiple perspectives would be necessary in researching these phenomena. He proposed a descriptive interpretation as a research methodology that would be most likely to determine a normative theory. This suggestion from Waldman supports the research approach taken within this thesis as detailed in chapter three.

Cameron (2011) equates responsible leadership with virtuousness and the leaders being and doing good. Recognising that many of the higher purpose leadership approaches (e.g. transformational, servant, and ethical) share many attributes, Cameron places RL as an all-encompassing ideal type. He also signifies virtuosity in leadership as an outcome in itself, not necessarily a means to a further outcome, and also that where RL includes virtuosity it is as aspiration toward the 'ultimate best' (Cameron, 2011, p. 35). He also indicates that virtuosity is instinctual (Hauser, 2006; Pinker, 2005). If Cameron is correct, then many leaders may well wrestle with their instinct for doing the right thing and the competing needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. Cameron's view of RL as an aspiration rather than specific practice may well make it more accessible and understandable within the



leadership community, where aspiring to be the 'ultimate best' may well be interpreted positively, but claiming to have achieved this may be seen as conceited, hubristic and un-realistic.

Voegtlin (2011) sees responsible leaders akin to conflict resolvers in that they proactively seek to engage all stakeholders in the decision making process and that within this forum the responsible leader will advocate for the organisation but give weight and be concerned for those affected by the organisation's activities. This is done with the aspiration of achieving a mutually acceptable decision for stakeholders inside and outside the organisation. Done in an open and demonstrable way, this can serve to create an ethical culture and practises within the organisation. Voegtlin (2011, p. 61) defines RL as, 'the awareness and consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders, as well as the exertion of influence by enabling the involvement of the affected stakeholders and by engaging in an active stakeholder dialogue. Therein responsible leaders strive to weigh and balance the interests of the forwarded claims.'

In their continued research into RL, Pless and Maak (2011) undertake a critical review of the published research on the topic of RL. They conclude that the research community has some common ground for understanding RL where RL is a 'relational and values-centred phenomenon that aims at generating positive outcomes for followers as stakeholders' (Pless & Maak, 2011, p. 4). As discussed above Relational Leadership has much in common with RL (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011) however it would seem there is a distinction where relational leaders have a strong focus on a dialogical approach to leadership and responsible leaders have a broader approach where they simply seek to 'engage' (Maak & Pless, 2006b) with the wider stakeholder community. This relational and values-based interpretation aligns well with the literature reviewed here.

Maak and Pless (2011) contend that the level of 'response' of responsible leaders may well vary dependent upon the situation, stakeholders and circumstance and as a result when asked what is RL, the answer must be 'it depends'. They go on to pose a significant and challenging question 'What is the role of leadership—and of leaders—in a network of stakeholders and how can a leader lead responsibly across various, potentially conflicting needs and interests?' (Pless & Maak, 2011, p.

10) (once again highlighting the complex and often conflicting challenges faced by responsible leaders). This thesis provides a response to these questions in its exploration of how RLs lead and who they see and prioritise as stakeholders. The (second and fourth) research objectives: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for, and: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation, are of particular relevance in exploring this aspect of RL.

Doh and Quigley (2014) see the need for stakeholder engagement as an aspect of CSR for the organisation and that RL is a function of the organisation. Thus, there is a potential to rationalise the divergent views of RL as functions or pathways within the organisation that lead to quality information flow, trust, ownership and commitment. Building on their earlier research Maak, Pless and Voegtlin (2016) further refined their interpretation of what RL is. Within this they define two styles of RL; instrumental and integrative. Instrumental responsible leaders are reactive to the most immediate stakeholders (e.g. employees, government and investors) and have a firm focus on business performance. They identify societal issues that will likely support business objectives and seek the business case for doing so. Integrative responsible leaders, however, have a dual focus of both business and societal issues and communicate this widely. They can be seen to network across a wide range of arenas and take on boundary spanning roles. The authors argue that a leader's value orientation (embodied in perceived moral obligations) predicts a leader's adherence to one of the two styles. The authors go on to propose that, in relatively stable economic environments, the instrumental approach may well be effective. However, in a globalised fast paced business environment, an integrative approach is more effective in mitigating 'governance gaps' poor CSR and is more likely to produce sustainable outcomes. This attempt to delineate RL could facilitate further research in that the integrative approach aligns with much of the previous interpretations of RL explored here and that those practicing instrumental RL may well be seen as not suited to furthering the understanding and potential of RL in its fuller form. This view mirrors aspects of Waldman and Siegel's (2008) earlier interpretation of RL and its concern for the extended stakeholder community where most prevalent in the business world was a concern only for stakeholders that directly impacted on economic performance, akin to Friedman's (1970) views on

economic theory and that firms need only concern themselves with profit and adherence to the law.

The theme of concern for the broader/extended stakeholder community is certainly one that is identifiable across much of the research (Antunes & Franco, 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006a; Maak, 2007; Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Waldman & Siegel, 2008; Witt & Stahl, 2016) and is often in the form of a psychological contract (Maak et al., 2016; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). Coupled with this is the view of personal moral or ethical values as a guiding mechanism for RLs (Cameron, 2011; Ciulla, 1998; Doh & Stumpf, 2005a; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Pless & Maak, 2004). However, where there is agreement on themes such as these there is also recognition that there are inherent complexities within this. For instance how does a RL balance the competing needs of a range of stakeholders (Pless & Maak, 2011) as discussed above. Within the majority of the literature, this is not clarified although for Voegtlin (2011) this continuous act of balancing competing stakeholder priorities is the act of RL. Also, if personal moral values are used as a guide for decision making then who is the arbiter for whose moral values are most moral or appropriate? Maak et al. (2016) and Waldman and Galvin (2008) see this too as a central challenge of being a RL and that there is an inherent need for RLs to have the cognitive abilities to manage this complexity. This leads to a situation where a RL must 'attempt' to balance the needs of all stakeholders without contradicting the virtues of being a RL (Waldman & Balven, 2014). Perhaps this is the most fitting interpretation of a RL, certainly it is normative and thus can be a guiding principle for both research and practice.

As indicated above, this thesis explores these dimensions of RL providing a deeper insight into the practice of RL as a form of leadership. The (second) research objective: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for, underpins new insights into who RLs view as their stakeholders, whilst the (fourth) research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation, explores how these competing stakeholder demands are managed.

It is apparent in the literature that there are a wide range of perspectives and frameworks from which to investigate and interpret RL. They include specific case studies (Pless, 2007) Human Resource Management (Gond et al., 2011) stakeholder

perspectives (Antunes & Franco, 2016; Maak, 2007) ethics based (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Jones et al., 2007) psychological frameworks (Ketola, 2012) and others.

Further to this, it is also apparent that much published literature on RL is not empirically based. Marques, Nuno and Gomes's (2018, p. 19) recent bibliometric literature review on RL (covering 2006 to 2016) identified 64 peer reviewed publications of which the majority had a 'theoretical essence (theoretical/literature or reviews/letters), clearly showing the first attempts to explore the concept of responsible leadership, thus revealing a research gap'.

This lack of a more nuanced understanding of RL is indicated as a key driver for further research on RL, to understand the concept as a framework (Greige-Frangieh & Khayr-Yaacoub, 2017) and process (Doh & Quigley, 2014) and that this is empirically based (Marques et al., 2018). This research project will deepen the understanding of RL as a process from the data gathered, as an interpretivist approach this may determine a generalisable theory and will be an original interpretation of RL as practice, as indicated by the projects main research question: What is Responsible Leadership in practice?

As indicated above, the key themes of extended stakeholder inclusion and ethical decision making are common in the literature in describing what an RL is and does. Within this project, it will be valuable to identify if these themes are apparent within the findings and further analysis informed by the current literature and its multiple perspectives of these aspects of RL. It is also recognised that understanding RL as a process within which leaders behaviours, decisions and values are implicated (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Waldman & Balven, 2014) may lead to deeper insights that adds to the variety of interpretations of RL in the current literature.

### **2.3.2 RL Antecedents**

Leader responsibility orientation is seen as an indicator and antecedents of RL where those who hold philosophies associated with deontology (linked with rules and human rights) would be seen as more likely to consider the wider stakeholder community in their decision making. Those who's philosophy has a consequence orientation (teleological), emphasise a focus on the end results, and will be more

likely to engage in activities that may be considered unethical (Pless, Maak, & Waldman, 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, leaders with personality traits and values that emphasise self-interest are less likely to engage in pro-social activities (Crilly, Schneider, & Zollo, 2008). Responsible leaders who hold self-transcendent values are more likely to demonstrate concern for society and make decisions that will avoid harm to society and offer potential benefits to the wider stakeholder community (Ashkanasy, Windsor, & Treviño, 2006). More specifically, leaders who demonstrate empathy have been found to engage in pro-social behaviour (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1990) and corporate philanthropy (Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012). This applies also to leaders who have achieved level five Cognitive Moral Development (the final and most sophisticated stage) where they apply principles of justice and consider societal needs in their decision making (Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010).

In an attempt to identify the individual leader antecedents to CSR behaviour, Crilly, Schneider and Zollo (2008) undertook a study into the socially responsible behaviour of leaders. They determined that self-transcendent values (seeing oneself as part of the bigger picture), positive affect (experiences positive moods) and moral reasoning were more apparent in leaders who were willing to engage in CSR activities. This significant investigation (survey of 643 managers across 5 multinationals) supported the earlier proposals of Maak and Pless (2006a) and Waldman and Galvin (2008) around moral decision making and wider stakeholder consideration as key attributes of responsible leaders.

Apparent in the literature is that the personal attributes and values of the individual are a key antecedent to them being a RL, with personal values of empathy, self-transcendence, morality combined with deontological views and a pro-social outlook seen as key factors. Within the RL literature, events in childhood are cited as instrumental in individuals later becoming RLs (Ketola, 2012; Pless, 2007). Pless (2007) indicates infancy as the time where an individual's needs around attachment, affiliation, exploration and enjoyment are formed and that these coupled with moral drivers that are developed over time become the motivational drivers that lead to RL. This view is supported within the broader literature on personal values, where childhood is recognised in the developmental psychology literature as a key time in

which personal values are formed (Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1982). These values are most significantly influenced by parents and formative years experiences (Bobowik, van Oudenhoven et al., 2011), a view shared by Freeman and Auster (2011) who interpret the formation of RL values with individuals considering and understanding the influences of their past.

As well as the RL antecedents linked with personal values, Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014) indicate contextual factors as an additional combining factor in their model of the antecedents to RL behaviour. Within their model they link two proximal contextual factors (the situation of the individual and the organisational culture, conduct etc) and two distal contextual factors (Institutional (national culture/legal/industry) and Global factors such as media). It is these contextual factors that influence what is acceptable and unacceptable practice and thus become pressures from which leaders will likely comply with as these practices are effectively endorsed by society. Waldman et al. (2006) demonstrated this in their study of 561 firms in 15 countries where, in those countries where collectivism was common practice, the responsible orientations of concern for the broader stakeholder community and society were more common.

Waldman and Siegel (2008) indicate further external drivers/antecedents for RL where they see shareholders as increasingly demanding of firms that they 'do well by doing good', thus indicating the need for business models that combine social responsibility and profit maximisation. This win-win scenario may well be frowned upon in many business circles, where the perception can be that social responsibility is a trade-off against profit. However Margolis and Elfenbein (2008) and Porter and Kramer (2011) indicate that shared value creation (social and financial) is both necessary and possible. This is particularly so where business does not consider society's needs and thus society is harmed, the very same society that the business exists in, the very same society that the business benefits from and depends upon. Where societies define and create needs that businesses meet, the two are intertwined and mutually interdependent. Where society is harmed or not supported, this can create internal costs for those businesses that are dependent upon it (Porter & Kramer, 2011), therefore sustainability it would seem is a further potential antecedents to RL.

As this study will further an understanding of the process of RL from the perspective of the RLs and their stakeholders, it is anticipated that there will be significant reference to the drivers and motivators for being a RL from the participants. Understanding the origin or fundamental reason as to why RLs choose to be so is a valuable contribution to the current knowledge base. If, as indicated above, it is early value formation that moves individuals to become RLs, how does this manifest for them? Were there key life events, does it influence their daily practice or simply the decision to become an RL? This depth of understanding of value formation and its links to RL practice is not present within the current literature and is explored within this thesis through the research objective: explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to RL. To this end it will be important for the semi-structured interviews to cover this area in some depth. Equally it will be important for the researcher to be mindful of his impact on this conversation and not lead the interview in anyway (e.g. applying confirmation bias/preference to align findings with this literature review). This issue and other aspects of researcher reflexivity are covered in more depth in the research methods chapter.

### **2.3.3 RL Practice and Culture**

The inherent complexity and challenge of satisfying multiple stakeholders (who may have mutually exclusive needs) would seem to be a key challenge in the practice of RL (Greige-Frangieh & Khayr-Yaacoub, 2017). Discussed by Waldman and Galvin (2008, p. 337) they highlight a key challenge for responsible leaders as 'to find creative ways to effectively balance the needs of multiple stakeholder groups...scan and think broadly about the environmental context and the manner in which a wide variety of organizational stakeholders may be served'. Miska, Hilbe and Mayer (2014) sought to develop a deeper understanding of responsible leadership from the perspective of the business. Their study investigated the influence of incentives relating to stakeholder engagement. Their findings indicate that neither monetary nor instrumental incentives were sufficient or needed for leaders to consider wider issues (e.g. societal and environmental), whereas demonstrable leader values and authenticity did positively influence others in stakeholder engagement. The authors also recognised the varying roles of leaders across a spectrum of responsibilities

from heavily economic focused to much more outward facing stakeholder orientated roles and that these perspectives did colour the approaches of the leaders. The conclusion drawn here was that simple 'trade-offs' across competing needs (e.g. Economic, environmental and societal) were not possible and could even endanger the firm's survival and the capability to navigate this complexity is a key feature of practising RL.

The challenge of making satisfactory 'trade-offs' is also present in Waldman and Balven's (2014) more recent work where they recognise the idealistic and potentially unrealistic nature of RL in its aspiration to satisfy multiple stakeholders. This was particularly so where responding to one stakeholder need (e.g. generation of hydroelectricity instead of coal fired power stations) may directly conflict with those of another (e.g. RSPB protecting wetland areas for bird nesting). Stahl and de Luque propose that the mechanisms in play within this complex environment influence the likelihood of RL being practiced. Where the culture of the organisation and the environment (e.g. regulation and legal demands) are supportive of wider stakeholders this creates a 'psychologically strong situation that likely promotes responsible leadership behaviour'. Where responsible leaders aspire to 'do good' this can be moderated by situational circumstances (as discussed in the previous section). For instance, where the likelihood of the 'do good' aspirational success is remote, the potential impact is minimal and the risk to business survival is high, it is unlikely that most RLs would pursue this course of action.

It is clear that the wider stakeholder community is a primary concern for RLs and this does seem to be consistent across multiple interpretations of RL as a form of leadership. However the literature does lack significant detail in that it refers to the wider stakeholder community, often citing the immediate stakeholders e.g. employees, customers, suppliers and local communities, and those seen as specifically wider stakeholders e.g. staff family members and future generations (Doh & Quigley, 2014) but does not explore the membership of this group at a significant level. Where are the boundaries of the wider stakeholder community of an organisation led by an RL? Do they include the immediate families of the employees? It would seem so. But what about the families of suppliers? This may be less likely, as the relationship with employees is likely to be much more significant



than with that of suppliers and thus RLs concerns may dwindle with more remote stakeholders. This boundary of the wider stakeholder community is not explored within the RL literature and this boundary may move depending on which of the stakeholders are enfranchised as members. If we are to refer to stakeholder theory there is also ambiguity, where Mitchell et al. (1997, p. 858) define stakeholders as those who have 'legal, moral or presumed' claims or interests in the organisation. The legal aspect may well be easily determined, however both moral and presumed claims are extremely vague and open to interpretation. Schwartz and Carrol (2008) indicate stakeholders as those within a network of connections of constituencies but also fail to indicate a boundary to this community. Thus, as recognised by Doh and Quigley (2014) we have a situation where the list of stakeholders is potentially limitless. This research project will explore this issue in an attempt to further the current understanding of the makeup of the wider stakeholder community as determined by RLs participating in this project. This is underpinned by the research objective: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for.

In recognising the challenge of balancing stakeholder needs, Doh and Quigley (2014) suggest mechanisms for operationalising this aspect of RL. They propose two pathways, the first is a psychological process mechanism which facilitates trust, ownership and commitment across all stakeholders, which when practiced can improve the likelihood of positive outcomes for the organisation and its stakeholders. The second is knowledge based and encourages the flow of information both within the organisation and between it and its stakeholders. The potential outcome here is that all concerned are more likely to increase their awareness of impactful issues that otherwise may have passed them by. This increase in interdependence clearly has the potential for responsive and responsible interactions across stakeholders. However, it is worth noting that this suggested solution is from a theoretical perspective and not empirical research. Indeed, there are no practical solutions offered within the RL literature on how balancing of multiple stakeholder needs has been achieved (Greige-Frangieh & Khayr-Yaacoub, 2017). The challenge of first deciding who your stakeholders are, followed by how you will communicate with them and how frequently, would be a challenging and costly activity that would require significant research, monitoring and resourcing in a

complex and changing world. Much of this activity could also be seen as a negative, such as email 'spamming', or lead to no tangible outputs, when there may be more pressing challenges for the organisation. With this in mind, it is difficult to imagine an organisation fully embracing this approach. However, as is indicated across the literature, RLs do engage with the wider stakeholder community, therefore furthering the knowledge on 'how' this is done in practice contributes to the outcome for this project (particularly where the findings give a deeper understanding of how RLs are coping with the complex challenge of engaging with the wider stakeholder community). This is supported by the (fourth) research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

Beyond the challenge of identifying and meeting stakeholder needs, it is incumbent upon RLs to demonstrate leadership practice that is in keeping with what is seen as responsible leadership (Greige-Frangieh & Khayr-Yaacoub, 2017). Within the literature this centres around the personal values of the RL (as discussed above) and how these are manifest in their leadership, the presence of moral or ethical values being a determinant of a leader's tendency toward RL (Maak & Pless, 2006a; Pless & Maak, 2011). Personal values associated with RL include empathy (Cameron, 2011; Pless, 2007), authenticity (Maak et al., 2016; Miska et al., 2014), accountability (Pless & Maak, 2011), values based (Doh & Stumpf, 2005a), virtuosity (Cameron, 2011), inclusion (Maak & Pless, 2006b), pro-social (Maak et al., 2016) and cognitive abilities (Maak & Pless, 2006b).

Organisational structure also has the potential to influence the practice of RL. In larger complex and hierarchical organisations it may be that certain managers do not have the remit for stakeholder engagement (Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012). Whereas in less bureaucratic organisation it may create flexibility for stakeholder engagement (Maritz, Pretorius, & Plant, 2011) although this can make the challenge of leading more complex (Pless & Maak, 2011) and deciding on the balance of these polar opposites becomes a further trade-off challenge for the RL.

The practice of RL is also seen to influence other aspects of business including employee turnover and retention. Doh et al. (2011) reported that employees who saw their organisation as high in RL were four times less likely to leave their organisation. Levels of work related commitment were also higher in those

organisations, demonstrating ethical concern for stakeholders (Phillips, Freeman, & Wicks, 2003).

Also recognised in the literature is that where RLs lead by example they create a culture of ethical behaviour (Cameron, 2011) that can also include the discouragement of unethical behaviour (Voegtlin, 2011) and has the potential to inspire followers and other stakeholders to be responsible too (Ketola, 2012). Where RLs actively demonstrate a concern for the wider stakeholder community in their leadership, followers are likely to emulate this (Stahl & Sully de Luque, 2014). This serves to further the culture of stakeholder concern and can enhance follower work-related attitudes positively (Voegtlin et al., 2012). Where a RL's actions are visible outside the organisation, this can enhance the organisation's reputation (Miska et al., 2014; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). This can also be explicit where transactions with customers (stakeholders) are truly in the mutual interest of the organisation and customer and can lead to customer good will and loyalty (Cameron, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006a). The literature also details several mechanisms specifically aimed at engendering responsible practices in RL led organisations, including RL development programmes (Blakeley & Higgs, 2014), RL focused performance reviews (Maak et al., 2016), using CSR as a guiding set of principles (Voegtlin et al., 2012) and also an element of reciprocity where employee's engagement with CSR can positively encourage their leaders to do likewise (Maak, 2007).

It is perhaps somewhat idealistic to expect interactions with customers to always be mutually beneficial, customers can have unrealistic demands, particularly so if they are more commercially orientated and have no real concerns for an RL led organisation. Is an RL willing to forgo income by excluding certain customer groups? particularly if that income can be used to support stakeholders the RL values. Equally, is it realistic to expect all staff/followers to uptake the mantle of responsibility just because the RL is active in demonstrating and focusing on this? There will inevitably be situations where staff members have competing demands across customer needs, peer needs, their needs and their family needs and balancing these in a manner that the RL will deem appropriate would be a significant challenge. Understanding the project participants RLs approach to leadership within

their organisations' both from their own perspective and from the perspective of their followers' will lead to new insights and inform the (fourth) research objective: Identify how RLs engage with and lead their organisation.

#### **2.3.4 Outcomes of RL Practice**

The outcomes of irresponsible leadership can be demonstrably bad for organisations (e.g. the collapse of Enron following illegal practices by CEO Ken Lay), whereas responsible leadership can be beneficial preventing costs such as fines and government investigations (and in doing so also reducing costs for the state in the policing and prosecution of illegal activities) (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). As well as mitigating costs as a result of responsible leadership, financial performance can also be enhanced where customer loyalty can lead to increased business (Maak & Pless, 2006a). More specifically RL practices have been seen to reduce employee turnover leading to a reduction in cost to the business (Doh et al., 2011). Simultaneously, motivated staff who are job satisfied are more likely to perform in the interests of the business (Cameron, 2011; Voegtlin, 2011).

Pless (2007) included the notion of effectiveness of practice as an important facet of a responsible leader. Simultaneously Maak (2007) proposed RLs as agents of business improvement through the building of social capital within organisations and that these social ties have sustainability through their shared values and interests. Where Doh et al.'s (2011) research showed that employee retention was improved where RL was practiced, this indicates a link between trust and effective leadership within RL (Burke et al., 2007) and building trust between stakeholders through the promotion of the common good and CSR. This view of pro-active engagement with stakeholders leading to business benefits was also recognised by Doh and Quigley (2014) where they identified that inclusive executive decision making led to fully informed and subsequently better quality business decisions due to a functional knowledge flow across stakeholders.

Exploring internal stakeholder management Antunes and Franco's (2016) empirical research indicated that as a result of RLs moving away from the traditional leader subordinate dyad to a social relational approach they improved cooperation (internally and externally) and were genuinely concerned for others. This lead to

friendly long-lasting relationships that engendered employee loyalty, commitment and facilitated the solving of complex business challenges.

Beyond business performance RLs concern for the wider stakeholder community creates value and sustainable networks beyond their own organisation (Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). This moral and social aspect of RL was highlighted by Maak and Pless (2008, p. 60) where they indicated responsible leaders as 'agents for world benefit'.

Within the scope of this project it will be useful to explore how RLs perceive their responsibility of staff engagement and retention and how they see this as linked to organisations success. Participant comments around these topics will produce insights to answer the (third and fourth) research objectives: Explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for, and identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

Beyond these insights, the literature has a very optimistic and affirmative view of RL in that when outcomes are explored the focus seems to be on the positives or benefits of RL. As a result, this presents as potentially unbalanced in that the negatives aspects are not significantly explored, challenges are cited (e.g. meeting of mutually exclusive stakeholder demands) but seen as an issue to be overcome rather than being explored as a downside or negative of RL. This suggests that an empirical exploration of RL from an open and reflexive position, led by the participants' comments (as discussed in the research methods chapter) may reveal a more balanced view of RL and add to the current interpretations.

## **2.4 Literature Review Conclusions**

This review spans the recent development of research on responsible leadership and other forms of higher purpose leadership. Within this, a number of themes and challenges can be identified. The two consistent features identified in the literature are the moral values of the responsible leader in question (Cameron, 2011; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006a) and the desire to engage with and be concerned for the wider range of stakeholders (e.g. employees, government, customers, suppliers, local and national community and related interest groups) and

the environment (Garriga & Melé, 2004; Jones et al., 2007; Miska et al., 2014; Waldman, 2011b). However, many questions highlighted as important in the literature are left unanswered, such as who constitutes the wider stakeholder community, how do RLs engage with them, why and how do RLs apply their moral values in decision making and - fundamentally - why have these individuals chosen, intentionally or otherwise, to be RLs? It is these questions that this research project informs, as is underpinned by the stated research aim: To explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership.

Recognising in the literature that personal values (Freeman & Auster, 2011) and virtuosity (Cameron, 2011) as being key components of RL, there may be insights as to why this is the case within the RLs to be studied. Much of the commentary in the literature around this aspect of RL is from a theoretical perspective on how values formation occurs, implicating RLs formative years as significantly influential to them becoming a RL but not wholly exploring this from an empirical perspective and relying more on the psychology literature (Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1982). Exploration of this element of RL from this project's participants' perspectives may create new insights into why RLs choose to be so, furthering the current interpretations. This is underpinned by the (first) research objective: Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to RL.

As is indicated in this review RLs engage with and are concerned for the wider stakeholder community (Antunes & Franco, 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006a; Maak, 2007; Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Waldman & Siegel, 2008; Witt & Stahl, 2016) and this is often in the form of a psychological contract (Maak et al., 2016; Waldman & Siegel, 2008), however the boundaries to this engagement in scope (who) and method (how) are not fully explored. This project can deepen this understanding of RLs concern for the extended stakeholder community by exploring who the participants see as their stakeholders and how they engage with them in practice. This is informed by the (second and fourth) research objectives: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for and: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

Also apparent within the scope of this review are the many features of being a responsible leader, which when combined present complexities and challenges in

the practice of RL. Balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders and society is a key challenge for responsible leaders, and one that requires sound judgement built from extensive experience and cognitive abilities (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). One needs to be viable before one can 'do good' thus being effective is a key component of RL (Pless, 2007). Although there is much recognition of the challenges that are inherent with the current interpretations of RL there are, as yet, no prescribed solutions or agreed upon interpretations (Ketola, 2012; Maak & Pless, 2006a; Miska et al., 2014; Pless, 2007). Although Cameron's (2011) suggestion of RL as being more of an aspiration rather than a realisation does afford comfort in that practitioners can all access this challenge and seek to improve themselves and their approach as opposed to being the 'ultimate best' straight away. Understanding this aspect of RL from the project's participants' perspective will create insights for the researcher and lead to a new interpretation of RL and is underpinned by the (third and fourth) research objectives: Explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for and: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

This project will add much to the current thinking on RL as there are many interpretations of RL (Pless & Maak, 2011; Waldman & Galvin, 2008) that lack an empirical base (Marques et al., 2018). There is also much overlap with other higher purpose leadership theories (e.g. Authentic, Ethical, Servant and Transformational) and the level of responsiveness amongst leaders can vary (Pless & Maak, 2011). Indeed 'the precise manner in which leaders interpret and actually display responsibility is not altogether clear' (Pless et al., 2012, p. 51). This dissection of RL and the wider higher purpose leadership literature will serve the researcher in better understanding the concepts and practises. It is also important to note that where there are differences there may also be many similarities (as indicated in this review) and that identifying these common themes of RL, both within this review and this research, will be key to this project. This is underpinned by the project's aim: To explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership, this in turn being supported by the four research objectives derived from previously unreported or minimally explored aspects of RL within the current literature:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation

The project findings informing these research objectives will combine to respond to the main research question: What is Responsible Leadership in Practice. This, in turn, will provide an insight into RL as a process of leadership making it accessible to practitioners and theorists whilst simultaneously responding to the RL literature's explicit questions, 'to whom are business leaders truly responsible, and for what?' (Pless et al., 2012, p. 52) and 'to whom and what are leaders responsible for' (Waldman & Galvin, 2008, p. 339).

As is discussed above, the current literature on RL is at a relatively nascent stage and as such an inductive interpretive approach will be applied in exploring this phenomenon. This research approach, rationale and philosophy are reviewed and discussed in the following chapter.



## **3 Research Focus and Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In its review of the current knowledge base of RL, the previous chapter identified a number of themes, differences and gaps with the extant literature on RL. This review has framed the central research question (Cresswell, 1998) What is responsible leadership in practice? Coupled with the underpinning rationale (detailed in the introduction) this has framed the main research aim and objectives of this study. This chapter further clarifies the aims and objectives of the research and justifies the research methods applied to the exploration.

Detailed below are the specific aims and objectives of the research followed by an overview of the research method and a detailed discussion of the researcher's philosophical approach. The research method is then described fully along with specific details of the actual approach taken within this project. Within this, excerpts of the analytical processes applied are presented with data from the project by way of example. Further to this, there are details on how the findings were arrived at and also acknowledgement of how reflexivity and ethical elements were considered and managed.

### **3.2 Research Aims and Objectives**

In order to investigate how and why responsible leadership is practiced, the central research question posed is:

*What is Responsible Leadership in Practice?*

This is supported by the research aim which is to: Explore the dimensions of responsible leadership as a form of leadership.

The stated research aim will lead to an investigation of the process of RL, investigating the dimensions of 'why' responsible leaders choose to be so, 'who' they believe they are being responsible to, 'what' they are responsible for and 'how' they

then lead responsibly in practice. This subset of questions is underpinned by the following objectives, which are to:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for (the who dimension)
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension)
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)

### **3.3 Research Method**

The research question and aim of this project are framed as an investigation into social phenomena. It is reasonable to take an inductive approach in this investigation which is supported by the status of the current literature where little is reported about how businesses are currently engaging with responsible leadership, as the majority of the published research is from a theoretical perspective (Marques et al., 2018). An inductive approach is suited where the study is based in a complex social world of values, behaviours and intentions and that the imposition of an external logic would hamper a deep understanding of such situations (Gill and Johnson 2010).

The method adopted for this investigation was a general inductive thematic analysis (Thomas 2006). This qualitative research approach is described and discussed in detail in the section Research Methodology (below).

### **3.4 Philosophical Approach**

The impact of an individual's own philosophy is of significant importance in the arena of social research and the methods applied. The author's view or 'baggage' will have an impact upon what is done and also how it is understood (Johnson & Clark, 2006, p. xxii). From my research and reflections, I understand myself to have an objective ontology and subjective epistemology. Within epistemology 'there are no, final, incontrovertible end points' (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 177) and all knowledge is influenced at source by socio cultural factors (Habermas, 1974). My

values align with the pragmatist Richard Rorty with a recognition of an objective world 'out there' but where descriptors of the world are not as these are human constructs (Rorty, 1989). This interpretation approach adopts *Verstehen* where social actions are meaningful to the subjects involved and thus should be interpreted from their perspective (Bryman, 2012). This approach is appropriate for research involving humans who have an internal subjective logic (Gill & Johnson, 2010).

Rorty's view of pragmatism was that theory supports practice and practice supports theory and that concepts need to support action to be relevant. He identified himself as a relativist and social constructionist whilst specifically rejecting the notion of a correspondence theory of truth (Rorty & Williams, 2009). He contends that we cannot separate what is outside us from what is inside us and that there are no absolutes. He even challenges his own label of relativist as a result of a 'lacking vocabulary born of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies' (Rorty, 1999, p. xviii). In challenging Platonic discourse, he recognises a more appropriate self-descriptor as 'anti-dualist' (ibid xix) indicating that binary measures are inadequate in the complex inquiry of the human condition. This view is reflected by the early pragmatist Chauncey Wright (Misak, 2013, p. 25) who proposed that researchers must not be content with that which is most plausible and probable and that the outcomes of inductive inquiry are 'working ideas – finders, not merely summaries of truth'. The recognised father of North American pragmatism Charles Pierce (Rorty & Williams, 2009) went on to conclude from this thinking that where a working idea was shown to work forever, only then would this indicate the belief to be 'true' (Misak, 2013). Thus pragmatism can only be a journey rather than a destination and can never be realised as a final theory or defined practice as it does not recognise absolute truths. This idea of 'journey' or continually 'becoming' is very much aligned with Cameron's (2011) view of RL where being the 'ultimate best' is not achievable but striving to be so is the act of responsible leadership.

Rorty's notion of pragmatism is of particular relevance to this project when we consider some of his more nuanced views, in particular where he views a philosophy as useful or useless rather than dualistic in the Cartesian sense. In responding to the question 'useful for what?' he elucidates this as being a 'better future', better meaning more of what we consider good and less of what we

consider as bad. This fuzziness he recognises is because we pragmatists do not believe the Universe is conforming to a plan but will surprise and exhilarate us as it evolves. He rejected the notion of truth as the aim of inquiry and again recognises language as a poor mechanism to communicate the real value and purpose of inquiry. For Rorty, to arrive at truth one must explore and rationalise every conceivable alternative and critique, such as is not possible for us to do. However, justifying an avenue of inquiry insofar as it will be useful in the furtherance and improvement of the human condition, he recognises as appropriate justification (Rorty, 1999). It is this view of justification of purpose and the shared philosophical views of Rorty that I the author hold and thus have adopted as my approach in this inquiry.

Within the nature of the study, I recognises the significant shortfalls of a capitalist economy (Harvey, 2014) and hold values aligned to critical research communities in a shared desire to emancipate those who might be oppressed within society. However, I am also mindful my view of emancipation could readily be that of oppressor depending on one's individual values and perspective. Thus, my approach although that of a pragmatist will not be critical, in an attempt to interpret the source data from as neutral a point as is practicable. Studying aspects of individual and organisational behaviour is complex and unique and an interpretivist perspectives are appropriate (Saunders, 2011). My views, however, will be present within the research and mitigating the impact of this through reflexive practice will be key. Reflexivity can help examine the impact of the researcher, empower participants and support evaluation (Finlay, 2002). This is discussed later in a specific section of this chapter.

As a pragmatist I see this thesis as a stand-alone artefact that will exist as an outcome of my investigation. With this in mind I have chosen to report my findings in the third person, as for me this then presents as a more open account that is accessible to practitioners. Having worked in the business world for over twenty years I know that this format of report is common place and to offer a first person approach would likely be seen as a (less useful) personal reflection rather than a source of useful information that can be practically applied. Equally, having spent over twenty years writing reports in this format I believe it is an approach that

capitalises most on my skills. However within the scope of this thesis I have found that discussing reflective elements in the first person to be more accessible and informative to the reader, such as this section and my claims to contribution in chapter seven and have therefore applied this approach in these sections.

### **3.5 Pragmatism and Process**

Understanding RL from a pragmatist's philosophical lens indicates a need to understand both the theoretical and practical aspects of the phenomenon and their interplay when practice informs theory and theory informs practice (Rorty, 1999). Therefore, understanding the process of RL will facilitate the identification and understanding of systemic characteristics that can lead to a deeper theoretical understanding whilst simultaneously elucidating practical implications (Segatto, Dallavalle de Pádua, & Martinelli, 2013). In an increasingly complex business environment (Skaržauskienė, 2010) where globalisation creates complexities for both organisations and societies (Leidner, 2010), understanding the complexities of the organisation one leads and its interplay with the wider world is needed, particularly in a world where predicting the future is becoming increasingly difficult (Ackoff, 1994). RLs create and utilise a broad stakeholder community to support their organisation's functions (Maak & Pless, 2006b). This network is a functional element of the business process and creates opportunities for improved performance (Siriram, 2011). Thus, understanding the constituent parts of this process and their interplay will enable praxis. Prilleltensky (2001, p. 748) describes praxis as the 'unity of theory and practice' that seeks to inform social practice through research and reflection. Within the pragmatist tradition, it is through this view of reflective theory-in-action we can learn most about the social systems we wish to understand and inform (Rorty, 1999). Understanding the processes and systems in play will enable praxis (Christens, 2016) and new knowledge creation within the field of RL where the process of RL is interpreted from a pragmatist view.

This investigation of RL as a process is further supported by the RL literature. Doh and Quigley (2014, p. 270) comment, 'Much work remains to be done as we continue to grapple with understanding the essence of responsible leadership. We

encourage future scholarship in this area to focus on process issues: If responsible leaders are, indeed, more effective, how do they manage these processes?' Also, Griege et al. (2017) suggest a need for more holistic research on RL to understand the interconnectivity of its functions within the wider context. In addition, Waldman and Balven (2014) see the investigation of RL processes and outcomes as the priority for any future research in this field.

### **3.6 Research Methodology**

The qualitative research methodology for this project will be a general inductive analytical approach. This approach is less rigid than other qualitative approaches (e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis and phenomenology) thus allowing for flexibility within the project (Thomas, 2006). It allows for the incorporation of 'stakeholder checks' of the findings which can enhanced credibility and make this approach well suited to the research aims of this project. This approach is closely aligned with and adopts aspects of the 'grounded theory method' proposed by Charmaz (2014, p. 1) with its 'systematic, yet flexible guidelines' and is consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1994) approach to inductive analysis, followed by accommodation, in which findings are checked with multiple parties to ensure theoretical generalisations are defensible outside the setting in which primary data was collected. A general inductive analytical approach is appropriate in investigating business relationships where trust is a factor (Jack et al, 2012), this qualitative approach is appropriate for the nature of the project and the philosophical views of the author, especially where the experiences of all engaged in the study will be important (Charmaz, 2014).

The author's background forms a historical context from which he can interpret behaviours and values and his being mindful of this and engaging in reflexivity will enable a deeper understanding of the findings. This approach also allows for the development of a theory from underlying processes evident in the data (Thomas, 2006). Charmaz (2006, p. 10) strongly advocates the alignment of social constructivism and the use of an inductive approach 'the very view you have as an observer shapes everything you see', and that fundamentally you can only

understand from your own perspective, neutrality is not possible. Goulding (2009) indicates that inductive analytical approaches are often used where the topic has only been covered minimally within the literature, as is the case within this study.

With its application of Charmaz's (2014) grounded theory method, Thomas's general inductive approach (2006) as a methodology aligns well with the methods and philosophical approach utilised in this project. The social constructivist nature of pragmatism (Rorty 1989) (as explored above) reflects Charmaz's (2014) views on the constructivism of grounded theory method where interpretations and understanding are created in the context of the individual's own experiences, where who you are shape's what you see. It is this social constructivist philosophy that implicates the research methods and approach selected for this project. As detailed below the methods include semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to explore and build understanding of the research area as part of the project, thus facilitating praxis (Rorty 1999), whilst also building an interpretation within the researcher that is driven from the data itself (Charmaz 2014). This inductive interpretation of the data is wholly applicable to projects involving the subjective views of humans (Gill & Johnson, 2010) including both participants and the researcher. The thematic trends constructed by the researcher will in turn be influenced through the application of reflexive practice so as to recognise the researcher's views represented in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) creating the potential for deeper insight and findings development.

In addition to the interviews the participants will be invited to review key findings created by the researcher (supporting the philosophical pragmatic aspirations of praxis) which will enhance the credibility of the project through accommodation (Corbin & Strauss, 1994) whilst also creating the potential to further interpret the findings through this social constructivist approach (Charmaz 2014).

Detailed in the following sections are the specifics of the research methods applied and where relevant aspects of the methodology are incorporated into the discussion.

### **3.6.1 Organisation Sample Selection**

The organisations and RLs invited to participate in this study will be identified as those where responsible leadership is likely to be practiced. In order to identify organisations where RL will be present, proxy indicators will be used. These indicators will be demonstrative of values and actions of the organisation that are clearly linked to responsible leadership or ethical business practice (EBP).

These indicators include identifiable Corporate Social Responsibility activities and/or processes (Waldman & Siegel, 2008) and EBP values orientated commentary within annual reports (Pless et al., 2012). Public reputation will also be considered, where an analyst/researcher would readily link the individual with employing CSR values in their leadership practice (e.g. Anita Roddick and Bodyshop) (Pless et al., 2012), as will be independent and credible recognition for sustainable or responsible business practices e.g. UK Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Award (Chamber of Commerce, 2015). The 'Cooperative Marque' is an appropriate indicator as the Marque is to help co-operatives identify themselves as part of a global co-operative movement (Alliance, 2019) as will be a demonstrable measure and commitment to a 'triple bottom line' (for e.g. see Elkington (2013)). Organisations that hold the UK Social Enterprise Mark will be appropriate for inclusion in the study and will be considered (Social Enterprise Mark, 2019) as will holders of one or more of the ISO 14000 certifications (aimed at minimising an organisations impact on the environment).

The use of the stated indicators will be to identify potentially suitable organisations for inclusion in the study. Of importance within the selection process will be the need to verify that where an indicator of RL or EBP is present that it is influential on the business practices of the organisation. This is to say that where a statement indicates a position, practice or value of the organisation aligned with RL that there is evidence to support this is being practiced and is a guiding/influencing measure and not a marketing ploy. An ethical business culture is present where there is reciprocity between internal and external stakeholders and where employees explore ethical options within their decision making and have a sense of right and wrong (Ardichvili, Mitchell, & Jondle, 2009). The ethical businesses' shared



values and beliefs serve to guide the organisation and staff (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990).

Additional indicators were considered but subsequently rejected for the reasons stated:

- European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (European Commission, 2017). The implied priority here is on business financial performance ahead of stakeholder inclusion.
- British Standards Institute. The focus of their standards is primarily on performance improvement, risk reduction and growth (British Standards Institute, 2019).
- The Responsible Business Standard. This is a UK SME focused standard that when achieved signifies that the holder meets ethical business practices (Organisation for Responsible Business, 2019). However, there is no external validation or recognition of this standard and the audit process and is therefore open to abuse.

The number of organisations included in the study will be sufficient to achieve saturation. Saturation is defined as 'where no new categories or relevant themes are emerging' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 148). Within this constraint, the researcher will analyse in-depth each category of data as it emerges. There are a range of views amongst researchers on the number of interviews needed to achieve saturation, these include:

- Grounded theory method where Creswell (1998, p. 64) indicates "20-30 interviews" and Morse (2000) indicates 30-50 interviews.
- Qualitative research where Bertaux (1981) indicates 15 as acceptable and Charmaz (2006) suggests 25 participants.

It is anticipated that at least three interviews will take place in each organisation. Initially aiming for twenty-one interviews overall (thus aligning with those views above), seven organisations will be included. Saturation will be achieved within this

sample group where themes are recurring constantly and no new themes are emerging during the final interviews analysis.

### **3.6.2 Individual/Participant Sample Selection**

This purposive sampling approach will enable the study to focus on the cultural domain of RL within the organisations. The interpretive researcher should select the sample that will enable their understanding of the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2002). The focus of this approach facilitates the efficiency of the project and enables appropriate data collection (Tongco, 2007). In order to capitalise on this approach, the selection of individuals interviewed is of key importance to ensure the quality of data (ibid). The culture of an organisations is created and nurtured by the leader as the entrepreneur and then has the potential to become a distributed function where anyone moving the organisation forward is effectively leading (Schein, 2010). The data collection for this study starts with an in-depth interview with the designated leader (e.g. MD, CEO) of those organisations selected and will move onto other stakeholders from here.

The findings of the initial interviews will inform the selection of future participants within the study. Effectively this will be ‘purposive snowballing’ (Newton & Appiah-Poku, 2007) where the leader indicated the ‘ripples’ of his/her RL actions and values – thus indicating stakeholders (internal and external) who may also value/practice RL or be in some way be affected by the leader’s responsible leadership. These individuals will consist of a pool from which future rounds of interviews will be drawn. The selection of these additional rounds of individual interviews will be based on the findings of the leaders’ interview and their perceived relevance of those other individuals and their involvement/engagement with the RL. Those implicated as ‘most’ relevant will be prioritised and interviewed (within practicable arrangements) until saturation of data is achieved (Morse, 2000).

RLs that agree to participate in the study will also be asked if they are aware of Leaders that they feel might fit the description of Responsible Leader (as has been discussed in the interview they have participated in) and if willing will be asked for their details in order to invite them to participate in the project. Once again utilising

purposive snowballing (Newton & Appiah-Poku, 2007) to identify potential future participants for the project.

### **3.6.3 Research Approach**

A primary aim of a general inductive analytical approach is to build theory from data (Thomas, 2006) as is the case with the grounded theory method approach (Charmaz, 2014). A theory is a set of relationships that explain a phenomenon. These relationships are determined from well-developed categories or themes found in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Initially, the author sensitised himself to the nature of the study through a moderate review of the relevant literature (chapter 2). This enabled him to identify important themes whilst collecting data, and also prevented him entering the study with a pre-disposition or point of view that could result from an extensive literature review. This approach recognises that an extensive literature review may adversely influence the author's interpretation of the data (Goulding, 2009).

Having identified participants, semi-structured interviews were the source of data collection. As indicated above, this commenced with the organisations' leader allowing them to explore their own views and experiences around RL and how it is linked to themselves, their leadership, their colleagues' activities, their organisation and its stakeholders. Aligned with the four research objectives:

1. Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
2. Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for (the who dimension)
3. Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension)
4. Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)

The questions here included:

- How did you come to be leading this organisation, where did it all start?  
(Informing objective 1)

- ‘What is your organisations purpose/mission and how was this arrived at?’ (Informing objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- ‘As a business leader who do you see as your stakeholders?’ (Informing objective 2)
- ‘Which people or groups of people does your organisation have an impact upon?’ (Informing objective 2)
- ‘How do you determine your stakeholder expectations?’... ‘which of these expectations do you seek to meet?’... ‘why and how do you meet them?’ (Informing objectives 2,3 and 4)

A sample of interview transcripts is located at appendix 2

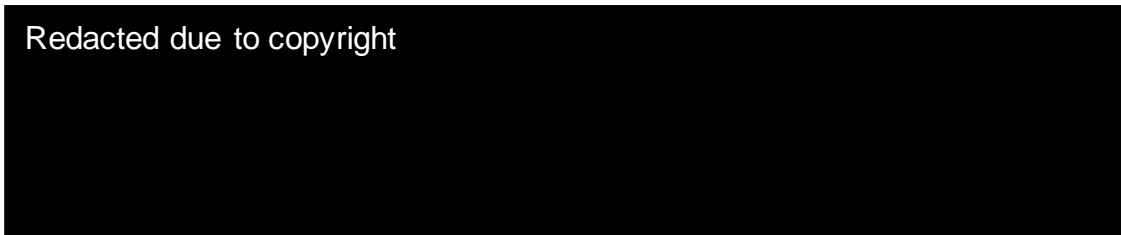
Semi-structured interviews give respondents more room to explain what is important to them (Corbin & Morse, 2003) which allowed the leader scope to explore and the researcher the opportunity to sensitise themselves to the RL issues that emerged. This initial discussion was also used as an additional screening method where leaders and their organisations that demonstrated no activity or values aligned with RL could be discounted from the project. However, it was not necessary to discount any participants from within this sample group.

Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the discussion and using Nvivo software the initial analysis of the data collected was guided by the research objectives. These constituted a ‘domain of relevance’ being investigated (Thomas, 2006, p. 239). Multiple readings and subsequent interpretations of the data indicated the initial findings where themes were created within each domain. These were established from the data itself where the researcher put aside his own preconceived concepts and ideas (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Categories of data that indicated higher level concepts or themes were identified through the generation of an interpretive label. Within this project at a macro level the data centred around two key areas, these were: 1) the participants experiences that led to them becoming a responsible leader and; 2) being a responsible leader in practice. These two distinct elements of process that emerged from the data were used as the format for presenting the findings (chapters 4 and 5). Where additional categories

and concepts were identified, the author created memos to support the analysis indicating how the categories or concepts were arrived at and what they are. These memos helped condense the data into a more manageable body of information and increased the sensitivity and awareness of the data and its relevance within the researcher. They also serve as an audit trail in order to investigate key areas in the future or revisit and review the original data (ibid). Where data aligned to more than one category it was applied to those relevant and where data was not linked to the research objectives it was discarded (Thomas, 2006).

The categories and concepts identified at this stage were provisional, scrutinised against further findings and added to, elaborated or discarded as the analysis moved forward (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This included the development of subcategories and lead to the combining of categories where meanings were similar. This combining of categories enabled the researcher to identify the key themes found in the data (Thomas, 2006) as presented in Fig 3.2 and within appendix 1. This approach (Overview at Fig. 3.1) allowed the condensing of categories into a small number of summary categories that aligned with the research objectives.

**Figure 3-1 Coding Process**



Redacted due to copyright

Creswell (2002: 266, Fig 9.4)

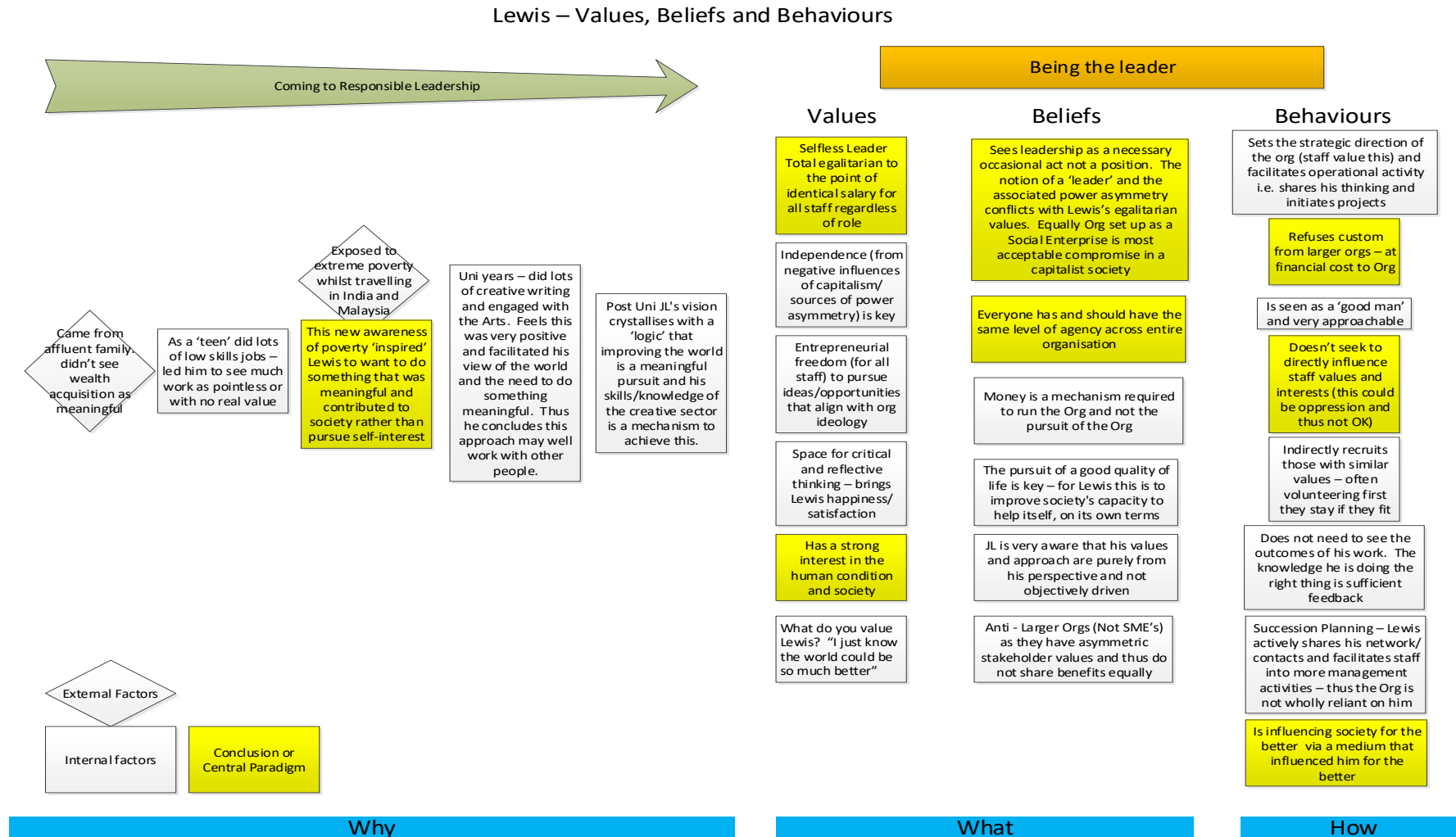
These categories were used to create profiles of each of the RL participants. The profiles were created directly from the data collected and depicted the journey of each of the RLs as described by themselves and their stakeholders. As can be seen from the exemplar profile below (Fig 3.2) as well as detailing the nature of each RLs journey, there was also significant data to identify the values, beliefs and behaviours of the RLs from the various participants' perspectives. Together this interpretation

of the data allowed for the collation across three of the four dimensions of investigation, with the fourth dimension being interspersed across the other three within the data for each RL. This, in itself, facilitated insights corresponding to the four objectives of the research:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for (the who dimension)
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension)
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)

As mentioned above an exemplar profile is shown below in Fig 3.2. All seven RL profiles (RL Journey Analysis) are located in Appendix 1. As can be seen, this allowed for the distinction of external and internalised factors and also the identification of core aspects/conclusions for each RL, which compiled into a journey or process for that RL. Driven by the data it also became apparent that the journey or process of RL delineated into two key aspects, 'coming to' and 'being' a responsible leader. It was this distinction arrived at from the data that led to the separation of the findings into two distinct findings chapters.

Fig 3.2 RL Profile – Lewis



#### **3.6.4 Authentication and Trustworthiness**

In addition to the analysis, stakeholder checks were used to authenticate the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and enhance their credibility (Thomas, 2006). This was done initially in an informal manner as the project progressed, where respondents were invited to comment on interview summaries and interpretations with a view to challenging or authenticating the findings (from their perspective). The participants fed back that they could indeed see themselves in the findings and were pleased that they had contributed to such a worthwhile project. No challenges or requests for amends were made by any of the participants.

As the project approached conclusion, those who participated in the study were invited to the EMES (L'EMergence de l'Entreprise Sociale en Europe) conference in June 2019 held at Sheffield Hallam University where some the preliminary findings were presented by the author. Of the seven invited, three RLs attended the conference and the authors' presentation of elements of this thesis. The informal feedback and commentary from these individuals was complimentary and positive in that they felt the findings reflected their lived experiences of being an RL and also highlighted aspects of RL that they could identify with, but had not previously considered (e.g. applying value preference around recruitment and selection). One of the participants also expressed an interest in furthering the research with himself as the case study.

This general inductive approach was aligned with the pragmatist view of 'ecological validity' (Johnson & Clark, 2006, p. 139) of a theory through its potential for application in practice (Misak, 2013), and was aligned with the author's pragmatist philosophical values of theory informing practice informing theory and this being potentially useful in improving the human condition.

### **3.7 Findings and Theory Development**

In order to reach the final conclusions and indicate the process of RL developed from the findings, the author integrated the concepts identified (Thomas, 2006) from which he constructed the explanatory process and framework (Corbin and Strauss 2008) detailed in the discussion chapter. This clearly identified how the participants



in this project had come to be responsible leaders, who and what they saw themselves as being responsible for, and how they practiced responsible leadership within their organisation, thus responding to the main research objectives. These findings were arrived at through the creation of 'core categories' that became apparent within the later stages of the analysis (Thomas 2006; Charmaz 2014). It was these core categories that were pulled together to indicate the process of RL as was experienced by the participants in this project. This process or theory of RL was a construct from these key areas (Corbin and Strauss 2008) and responded to the main research aim 'explore the dimensions of RL as a form of leadership' and research question, 'What is Responsible Leadership in Practice?' These findings are a construct from the subjective reflections and interpretations of the author.

### **3.7.1 Reflexivity**

A consideration during data collection and analysis was that of reflexivity. This included the researcher understanding his motivations and value preferences along with more practical aspects e.g. where the impact of the researcher's responses to participant's comments may have influenced the nature of the participant's following comments, which in turn may have influence the researcher. This particular example has the potential to lead to a co-construction of the data gathered (Corbin and Strauss 2008). This could occur at an unconscious level and as such it presented a significant challenge to identify and to understand fully. Within the scope of this project the author reflected and reviewed his interactions with participants to understand when and how he had (or may have) carried out reflexivity. This is not to say that reflexivity is bad practice. Quite the opposite. It is important to understand how and when it has occurred as this can add richness to the process of data collection and analysis and sensitises us to these issues and their implications within the project (Johnson and Duberley 2003). Finlay (2002) indicates that reflexivity can help examine the impact of the researcher, empower participants and support evaluation. Corbin (2008, p. 32) readily recognises that he 'could certainly see myself in the data' and that understanding this enabled him to reinterpret and rewrite the associated memos.

As indicated above, the researcher was also aware of his interests and value preferences in that the driver for the topic studied was arrived at as a result of his interests and values and that understanding and accounting for these within the scope of the project was important. Waldman (2008) recognises that the researcher of RL needs to be mindful of his/her values influencing research as it is likely they will be 'left leaning' in their political views. This is the case for this researcher and in the early stages of the project a more critical approach was considered. However, for the researcher this in itself was a values-based approach and as such could significantly influence the data collection and analysis. As a result, the subjective interpretive approach taken was arrived at where the author recognised the potential for influencing the study but sought to reduce this where possible and recognised it when it occurred. This information was captured in the memos taken within the transcription process and these memos were reflected upon within the analysis stages of the project. In addition to this, supervision sessions provided an excellent forum for discussions on these issues and enhanced the researcher's approach and reflexive capabilities throughout the project. Beyond this, discussions around reflexivity were had with participants to raise awareness with a view to limiting or acknowledging the researcher's influence along with the intentional use of silence and active listening techniques employed by the researcher.

### **3.7.2 Informed consent**

All subjects involved in the study were via personal invite and were given a full overview of the nature of the study. They were fully informed of the process, able to ask any questions and were able to cease participation at any time. They were given a written overview of the project and also asked to sign consent forms, which they did.

There was the potential for individuals to feel their views could be shared inappropriately which may implicate them in ways that could damage their career or personal standing, or it could be that staff members were coerced into participating in the project. To mitigate these issues the author agreed, up front, with all individuals and organisations involved in the study that all data collected was to be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be shared with anyone beyond the

researcher, his supervisors and examiners. Any findings published will not be attributed to individuals or organisations unless a future agreement on this is made. The author has sought and gained formal approval from the University ethics committee for this project.

### **3.8 Conclusion and Reflection**

On completion of the research project, the author feels that the general inductive analysis used was appropriate and allowed for his learning as the project progressed. The findings of the project surpassed the researcher's expectations and indicated the interrelations and interdependence of theory and practice. Beyond this one participant proactively sought to further the project and others indicated their view of seeing the value in this research demonstrates the pragmatist outcomes of the project and further justifies this approach.

As indicated above the findings went beyond expectations, were often surprising and occasionally shocking and it is these aspects that are presented and discussed in the following two chapters.

## **4 Findings ‘Coming to Responsible Leadership’**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The focus of this research project was to deepen the understanding of responsible leadership through an investigation into its dimensions of why RLs chose to be so, who they are responsible to, what they are responsible for and how they lead responsibly. Thus, responding to the research question: What is Responsible Leadership in practice?

The findings from investigating these four dimensions are presented in two chapters, where they break down into two constituent themes (as detailed in chapter 3). This, the first of these two chapters, covers aspects of what brought the leaders to becoming a RL and covers the dimensions of why, who and what and essentially tells the story of how the RLs came to responsible leadership. The second of the two findings chapters explores the how dimension of RL and includes content demonstrating what it is to be a responsible leader in practice. Although it is important to recognise there are many links and interdependencies between these four dimensions, the two findings chapters of 'coming to responsible leadership' and 'being a responsible leader' present an appropriate division from which to communicate the findings of the project in a meaningful way as it emerged from the data.

### **4.2 Coming to Responsible Leadership**

This, the first of the two findings chapters, outlines the underlying drivers that were instrumental in influencing the RLs in their approach to leadership that ultimately led to them becoming a responsible leader. This was primarily asking the question of why they came to responsible leadership along with who and what they felt they were responsible for. In exploring these aspects, the evidence from the semi-structured interviews indicates five areas of commonality as reported by the sample of RLs and their stakeholders, these are:

The why dimension (research objective: Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership):

- Significant influence from personal experience
- Significant influence from a mentor

The what dimension (research objective: Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for):

- An internalised value system that aligns with social betterment/improvement

The who dimension (research objective: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for):

- An expressed desire to improve the lives of others
- An expressed desire to improve the world

Although these areas were common across the seven RLs within the study, they were not uniformly distributed.

As demonstrated below, the evidence shows that a RLs drive to be a responsible leader originates from influences in early life (often their formative years) and that this influence is born of personal experience and/or a mentor. As can be seen from the following interview excerpts these influences were diverse across the RLs, ranging from a radical single epiphany, to a mentor recognising responsible leadership values and potential within a mentee and facilitating their progression into an RL role. A common theme across all RLs in the sample was the aspiration for social betterment by 'reducing inequality' (Cancian, 1995, p. 341) and/or responding to social need (Stockmann & Meyer, 2013) and thus improving the world and people's lives. For several of the RLs this was their espoused *raison d'être* and has become their life's work.

#### 4.2.1 Overview of Participants, their Role and Organisation

Detailed below (Table 4.1) is an overview of the participants, responsible leaders and their respective organisations:

**Table 4-1 Participant Overview**

Organisation and ownership	Participant	Role	Interview Date and Duration
The Learning Tree Limited Company	Bridget	RL	2/12/15 – 94 mins 28/11/17 – 62 mins
	Mary	Manager	8/2/16 – 55 mins
	Martin	Trainer	3/3/16 – 64 mins
	Paula	Administrator	8/2/16 – 34 mins
Arts for All Social Enterprise	Lewis	RL	16/5/17 – 77 mins 28/9/17 – 22 mins
	Jane	Administrator	18/5/17 – 32 mins
	Wayne	Director	25/5/17 – 55 mins
BI Rehab Limited Company	Will	RL	24/6/16 – 64 mins 2/11/17 – 18 mins
	Trudy	Professional Clinician	13/7/16 – 48 mins
	Howard	Professional Clinician	24/7/16 – 31 mins
The Stage Social Enterprise (CiC)	Martha	RL	26/4/17 – 66 mins
	Heidi	Manager	3/5/17 – 48 mins
	Elaine	Teacher	3/5/17 – 40 mins
Green Partners Cooperative	Richard	RL	2/4/17 – 98 mins
	Mary	Coop Member	26/4/17 – 24 mins
	David	Coop Member	26/4/17 – 46 mins
Enable Charity	Peter	RL	29/11/16 – 80 mins
	Frank	Supplier	5/12/16 – 22 mins
	Chris	Finance Director	11/12/16 – 48 mins
Better Communities Charity	Wesley	RL	15/6/17 – 74 mins
	Hue	Partner org' Leader	28/9/17 – 30 mins
	Sarah	Partner org' Manager	28/9/17 – 24 mins

	Carl*	Mentor to Wesley	n/a
BAG Charity	Phil*	Mentor to Peter	n/a

\* These individuals are referred to within the findings but did not participate in the research project

#### 4.2.2 RLs Born of Instrumental Experience

When exploring with each of the RLs their reasoning behind why they lead the way they do, the range of responses was varied and on one occasion disconcerting and worrying. This was the case with Bridget. These following comments came toward the end of the second interview and were in response to the question, "*What are the reasons you do what you do the way you do it, such as drivers from youth etc?*" her response was quite profound:

*Bridget: I was given away at birth – I grew up in an emotionally, physically and mentally and sexually abusive family*

*I was unloved, I was a 'possession and a thing' like an ornament that made other people look good. I had no voice, no courage, no happiness, no friends or knowledge of how to function in the world. I grew up a prisoner of others and a prisoner of my fears.*

*I want no child to grow up believing they are unloved, worthless, insufficient, powerless and voiceless.*

*I want every child to understand they are not a victim but they are the power to change the world. I do this in the kindergartens but I also do it by telling the grown-ups on training that they are free from oppression too - they have to believe it and see it from a different perspective. I want to be the catalyst for magical self-transformation and plant the seeds of change in everyone I encounter and for them to do the same.*

RL Interview dated 28/11/2017

(NB: Following this interview, the interviewer ensured the participant was comfortable with these comments being included in this thesis and also passed on the details of a BACP registered counselling service provider).

This was clearly a significant and extremely negative experience and it is not possible for the researcher to truly understand the impact and repercussions of this. This was, however, the immediate and frank response to the open question asked to this RL (as was asked to others). Bridget indicates an aspiration of emancipation for others who may have found themselves in similar situations and she is intent on facilitating this to the best of her abilities. Beyond this it is clear that this emancipation and change is through education and influencing of others with the hope that they too will become advocates of the same philosophy, thus reaching the widest possible audience.

A further and significantly positive instrumental experience for Bridget came in the form of an event taking adults with learning difficulties on a caving experience. Where a previously non-communicative individual opened up as a result of the experience:

*Bridget: At one time I had a job as a key worker at a day centre for people with learning difficulties (about 25 years ago) on one of the trips we went to an outdoor centre and took a group of grown-ups with learning difficulties with us and one of the people was a guy in his early 40s and in the 3 years I had worked there, at that point, he had only ever asked me for a cigarette lighter, no eye contact, no conversation, nothing. Then on this occasion when we went down a cave he held my hand to look after me and then he started to tell me about how the formations were made in the cave.*

*Interviewer: Ah, so the medium gave him a branch for communicating and friendship formation?*

*Bridget: Absolutely, it was that moment, literally, it totally rocked me, absolutely. And that changed everything and if nature has that ability to transform someone so magically then I want to be a part of it.*

RL Interview dated 28/11/2017



This was clearly a significant experience for Bridget and one that enabled her to see the potential for experiential learning and nature as a mechanism to facilitate development and personal growth within individuals. This led directly to Bridget's activation. Thomas and Hall's study of survivors of childhood abuse shows that many survivors indicated 'pivotal moments in their lives that accelerated the healing process' (Thomas & Hall, 2008, p. 164). It could be, for Bridget, that this was one of those moments. Epiphanic experiences are not a rare phenomenon in their capacity for reparative transformation in survivors of child abuse and can be triggered by activities such as outdoor adventurous activities (McDonald, 2008). Thomas and Hall's (2008) research also indicates that survivors who had gone on to thrive had also mentored other victims of abuse. This desire to support and help other survivors parallels Bridget's desire to transform the lives of other potential victims. It would seem that there is a therapeutically reparative link between Bridget's cave experience and the organisation she has established.

Important to recognise within this is that her desire to want to work in a field supporting others was already apparent in the role she describes (perhaps linked to her previous comments). This specific realisation was a combination of the potential of the experiential medium to facilitate personal development and the satisfaction of being able to be part of and facilitate something this impactful. Bridget went on to study outdoor education, countryside management and established her own business providing outdoor experiential learning for children. At 2015 (time of first interview) as the owner and leader of The Learning Tree she employed 20+ staff members and her provision was primarily across South Yorkshire with pockets of provision across the UK and beyond.

Bridget has also published a book on the values and educational approach her organisation takes and frequently engages in public speaking across the globe on this approach and its capacity to facilitate personal development. One of the organisation's managers comments:

*Martin: Bridget is incredibly good at speaking from her heart and does so in a compelling and passionate way and comes across really well as a storyteller so to speak. So, we use her strengths in talking and getting her on the right stage e.g. TEDx. She has developed a real skill in this area.*

From these comments it is clear to see that Bridget is a RL who has a passion to improve the world whilst also seeking to improve the lives of individuals she comes into contact with. Her early years were clearly a challenging and potentially damaging time and have led her to want to support others who may be facing similar challenges (Thomas & Hall, 2008). The nature and mechanism of this support was brought into focus for her as a result of a profound experience supporting others in the natural environment. This focus and drive has led to the creation and continued growth of a successful SME and has positioned her on the international stage as an expert in this field. From the other four RLs who came to responsible leadership as a result of an instrumental experience, Martha also indicates a number of personal influences that led her to becoming a RL. Martha is the founder and CEO of 'The Stage', a social enterprise that provides education to disadvantaged young people using the medium of performing arts. Her organisation works primarily with behaviourally challenging school children who have been excluded or are at risk of being excluded from school.

The personal influences cited by Martha include her religious and political beliefs:

*Martha: I think there is an element of upbringing certainly with the religious element. Although as I get older I question things, in many ways I am quite academic and as a result I will question and research the issue. It's not just upbringing as I am the black sheep in the family, as I am very much a socialist and my family is not very politically aware, and my family are very working class and aren't as aware politically. So politically and socially I am much more aware and more likely to engage in those kinds of discussion.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

It would seem a religious upbringing and belief has stayed with Martha in her adult life and work philosophy and that she has also developed a political view aligned with socialism. From her comments, it would seem that an enquiring mind and a more critical outlook has brought her to a deeper level of understanding of the world around her than her peers and family. This aspiration and capacity for learning can lead to improved self-efficacy which in-turn correlates with successful leadership

(Rynes, Giluk, & Brown, 2007) Martha's enquiring nature may well have made her more alert to the discrepancies in quality of life for working class families when compared to more affluent members of society. This view of a disenfranchised underclass is made more apparent when she goes on to comment that:

*Martha: ...at the moment one of my key drives behind this is that I don't believe as a society we give young people enough of a voice and I feel that they are a forgotten generation. And I think that started in my generation and from then onwards they have been forgotten.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

It is likely that this view is in part influenced by Martha's time working with street children and gangs in Brazil which she participated in in her formative years. She refers to this experience. When asked what other influences brought her to RL, she replies:

*Martha: The other stuff has come from my experiences, such as I lived in Brazil when I was 18 and I was living in Shantytowns. So, I guess for me 18 is the age where you really start to develop and work out who you are. So, there is a lot of influence from living in Brazil for 6 months at that age and then I went out there every year spending holiday time there working.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

This experience of witnessing and being exposed to the challenges and suffering of less fortunate communities has made an impact significant enough that Martha continues to support these communities 15 years after her initial visit. Martha goes on to reflect and recognise the influence this has had (and continues to have) on her and her desire to help those less fortunate than herself. Reflecting further she comments:

*Martha: And I had worked in Brazil with street children and that was a big thing that I wanted to have a base in Brazil and work with the charity I worked with in Brazil and I still work with them. And to be able to offer them services and eventually have a base over there. So everything that I was describing to them was pointing straight back to communities, socially, locally and internationally. And then I have worked in Brazil with street kids and gangs which is why when I developed that work here in the UK and now I go back*

*there and I train professionals over there on how to work with the techniques that we use with kids. So really that was all pointing to that and as time went on you start to realise this is what it's about and then a few years ago I did a Masters degree and that was in Social Enterprise and Cooperative Management and that was in many ways it was a confirmation that I was doing many things right so it reaffirmed a lot of what I was doing.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Here, Martha indicates the focus of her support was with street children whilst in Brazil. Supporting disadvantaged children has direct links to the work her organisation does in the UK and her earlier comments around today's children being the forgotten generation. Whilst these comments were made it was clear to the interviewer that there were many strong emotions attached to them (Martha seemed lost in her memories and deep reflections whilst talking about this point of her life). Thus the interpretation of the interviewer during this discussion was that the time Martha spent in Brazil in her teens was formative and continues to influence her today.

We can also see from her comments that the early aspiration to support those in need was reaffirmed where Martha reflects after some time that she is doing the right thing *"as time went on you start to realise this is what its about"*. Beyond this, she then goes on to undertake a Masters Degree in a related topic which further bolsters her resolve to support those less fortunate, whilst also developing her capabilities in doing so.

We can interpret from Martha's comments many similarities between her views of the Street Kids from the Brazilian Shanty towns and disaffected young people in her own working-class community in the UK. She indicates that she continues to support the Brazilian children and their communities whilst she has developed and grown her own organisation with the same focus in Sheffield. *"I train professionals over there on how to work with the techniques that we use with kids"*. This demonstrates her desire to support young people she views as having limited support and few or no opportunities and that she is keen to capacity build (in the UK and Brazil) in order to reach the largest number of children in need. It would be reasonable to conclude that this was initiated by her early life experience living in

the Brazilian shanty towns where her existing religious and socialist views were galvanised when she was exposed to extreme hardship in others. Her deep level of reflection has spurred her to do something about the injustice in society she has witnessed. Burke (1991) tells us that individuals who are capable of reflexivity that leads them to action are those that can have a lasting effect on society. Another RL in the study had a similar instrumental experience to Martha (above) when he was exposed to extreme poverty in the developing world whilst taking a year out travelling. This was Lewis.

Lewis is the founder and CEO of Arts for All a Social Enterprise that seeks to challenge individuals to think constructively about their values and contribution to the world. This is done through the medium of the arts and the written and spoken word (via free publications and events). The organisation employs around 12 full time staff and contracts a large group of associates.

On enquiring about his motivations in being an RL he reflects:

*Lewis: Also my year out between school and Uni was quite important and eye opening experience for me, where I became the 'other' as quoted by Hemingway, so I found myself as an outsider and that resonates with me looking back. This time really opened my eyes to the poverty in the world in India and Malaysia, places like that where you see that complete difference and scale of poverty that you are unaware of. So I think that imparts on you a knowledge that there are bigger issues at play that could benefit from engaging with, although I haven't gone into a line of enterprise that directly combats poverty. So, there is no clear line but I think it inspired a notion that my time would be better spent doing something that is contributing rather than was perhaps purely self-interested.*

RL Interview dated 28/09/2017

Coming from an affluent background "*I grew up in relatively affluent household; money was not that important as we had it*" it would seem that Lewis was not aware of the reality of extreme poverty in the world until he came face to face with it. This exposure whilst on his travels clearly made a lasting impression and was eye opening and '*inspired*' him to contribute to the world. Thrash and Elliot (2003) recognise openness as a precondition for inspiration and that experience and

objects are abundant in life but we need to be ready or open to be inspired, achieving this through avoiding narrow thinking. Lewis's response to this could be an implicit inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2003) that he wanted to make the world a better place as a result, thus demonstrating a level of transcendence.

After returning to the UK in the early days of establishing his organisation, Lewis comments on another experience that further influenced him. Once again this was interacting with people facing extreme hardship:

*Lewis: we were all working other jobs at that time including me working at the Big Issue which gives you a really good insight into other ways of being and that was important too.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

As a result of his experiences, Lewis did not simply 'walk on by' but started a process of reflection that led to engagement with people and communities that he perceived needed help. This aspiration to do something meaningful with his life is brought into focus when Lewis reflects on his formative years in low skilled employment:

*Lewis: Also, from an early age I was working and was always encouraged to have a job, certainly from my teens onwards and one of the ways of getting work was via an agency where you did a range of jobs. And I wonder if at an early age this makes you realise that lots of work has no end purpose because I am moving between lots of short term jobs that don't have any kind of purpose outside of themselves and they are largely for faceless employers as I don't meet them. So, I wonder if that gives you a view on the nature of work in our economic structure.*

RL Interview dated 28/09/2017

We can see from this that Lewis is a person who takes little at face value and is a reflector and thinker and as a result has become a person who seeks a higher purpose in his endeavours. At an early age he is readily challenging the established mechanism of working purely for financial gain, although this could be linked to the previous comment regarding the lack of need for money. But this line of reasoning is diffused when we refer to comments made by colleagues in his own organisation Jane: *He's (Lewis) a good egg (laughs). It is his morals and principles that come before any concerns about finances."* It would seem that this lack of concern for

monetary gain permeates Lewis's values and reaffirms that his interest lay in contributing to society not personal gain indicating the potential for a higher purpose leader (Jackson & Parry, 2011). This lack of value in financial gain is brought into stark focus when during the interview Lewis is asked if he could indicate an act of RL he has brought about in his organisation, his response is very revealing:

*Lewis: Probably a good one for this is the fact that we have as an organisation decided to have a flat pay structure and pay everyone in the company the same hourly rate.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

This is a very unusual practice and the first time the researcher has come across this approach (having spent 30+ years in the business world). Ostensibly this would seem to be an exemplary practice in egalitarianism (this aspect of Lewis's leadership practice is explored further in the following chapter).

Lewis's propensity for deep reflection and thinking, it would seem, have brought him to more profound conclusions around economics and politics: *"I am not a big fan of capitalism as a system so the fact that I have to work in it is a constant jar"*. He is clearly at odds with the capitalist system. However, it would appear he is realistic about the economic status quo and makes do as best he can *"...and capitalism is very much the dark side of the force, through which we are working. And trying to be the light side through the dark side works very badly"*. This metaphor further demonstrates Lewis's reflections that have led to an anti-capitalist view and the aspiration for something better. Within the interview, Lewis did not presume to have the specific answers that might fix capitalism, but when pushed he did elaborate on his drivers:

*Interviewer: So it is not about the money, what is it about? Why did you bother with the whole thing?*

*Lewis: Well it is a combination of arrogance and stubbornness. Arrogance in the assumption that what you are doing has value, which it may or may not depending on who you talk to, there is no objective social values that I can think of.*

RL Interview dated 28/09/2017

Even when pushed, Lewis was reluctant to self-judge that he knew what he was doing had value to society and only that within his frame of experience and awareness he assumed this to be the case. It would seem that Lewis's aspirations for egalitarianism extend to his view of an individual's values and that ultimately none of us know for sure that we have the objective truth (Duberley, Johnson, & Cassell, 2012). However, having acknowledged this he is, in his own subjective way, attempting to improve the lives of others and society as he sees this as meaningful and rewarding.

Not all RLs in the project presented such clear definitive experiences that moved them toward becoming an RL. Richard's underlying drivers were brought about more during a period of his life rather than a specific experience. Richard is the founder and holds a self-described role as '*strategic leader*' of Green Partners, a worker cooperative trading in organic veg, microbrewery, bar, event management/venue hire and commercial kitchen activities. The cooperative has eight part time member-workers of which Richard is one. His self-described role as strategic lead would imply he is directing the activities of organisation himself which does not wholly align with the partnership principles of a coop. This oxymoron is further explored in the second of the findings chapters.

As with the previous RLs' experiences, the formative years played a significant part in bringing Richard to responsible leadership. We can see below when asked how did he come to be a RL, he indicates a broad level of experiences centred on social groups some of these being illicit subcultures and anti-establishment. His response was extensive and came across as something of a positioning or justification statement for him and the organisation:

*Richard: A combination of factors really, personal experience, experimentation with recreational drugs, living in subcultures of rugby, having had really enjoyable teenage years playing rugby with a group of people, scouts spending amazing times in the scout movement, the rave culture – again a form of subculture which was very influential on my perception of the world. Social movements like the coop movement, transition like preparing communities for life after oil – that being a transition movement. Transition is hardwired into Green Partners, we see ourselves as an economic element and a project of the*



*transition movement. We identify with this, in that things are going to get worse before they get better. There needs to be responses to that because the state is a failing state and the market is a failing mechanism for resource exchange. So, it is an awareness of things and a willingness to commit whatever resource is available to tackle some of those issues. Not thinking that we will completely succeed but we might make it better. So, whether that is like having an allotment and showing my children how to grow food, making sure they don't watch too much TV, making sure they read books and know what they are talking about. We are not hippies, we are more punk. We are not fucking about. We are doing something that is different and something that is difficult and therefore we have to do it well because when people see those attempts potentially fail on the way, then they say it's because they are different. And there are a lot of attempts, I know someone who bought 25 acres of land to live the dream and it nearly killed him. We are not accustomed to the hardship. So, lots of factors.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

It is very apparent that Richard's formative years have led him to challenge the dominant economic and political model for commerce and that in his view there is a need for change (not unlike Lewis above). His statement makes it clear that he recognises the enormity of the challenges that he sees ahead and that it is likely that he and the coop may contribute to this change but not resolve it. He also classifies the coop as '*punk*' and that they are non-conformist in doing something that is '*different and difficult*' further indicating anti-establishment views. Within this, he has recognised the need for positive outcomes to prove the worthiness of the movement his coop is involved in. It could be that he has met with much criticism where he comments '*we have to do it well*' to disprove the naysayers who indicate it is '*because they are different*' that they fail. Richard's view is quite entrepreneurial in that he sees failure as a part of the process (Wickham, 2006).

Throughout this small monologue and other comments (below), it did come across to the interviewer that Richard was very much the underdog fighting for what he believed in and that it was battle after battle in a much larger war. He was David with neo-liberalism as Goliath. This particular commentary (above) was delivered

with an impassioned zeal and when coupled with unexpected passionate commentary such '*we are not fucking about*' was very compelling.

It is clear to see from Richard's comments that he is about social change and making the world a better place and that this is meaningful to him as an individual. We can see this need for a meaningful lifestyle is linked to his early life experiences when he reflects on growing up with entrepreneurial siblings and parents:

*Richard: We are all quite entrepreneurial and as a result there is a family portfolio but aspects of what we are doing haven't all made lots of money but they are meaningful and they are a source of happiness and enjoyment both for ourselves and others and it is all down to the meaningfulness of it. And there is a utopian project notion we are trying to create a better world this is actually what we are doing, not trying to make lots of money. I think we have already achieved that to an extent, there is still a long way to go but it is going to be you know 20 odd years as I am going to do it till I'm dead. Why wouldn't I? Its great and it's a product of my own initiative.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

This commentary further demonstrates Richard's ambition to change the world and his impassioned engagement with this co-op. It is also apparent that Richard has a strong personal ownership of the organisation as it is a '*product of my own initiative*', this perhaps adds to his view of being the '*strategic leader*'. This does present complexities in that a cooperative would have a more pronounced democratic management system (Co-operatives UK, 2017) and that Richard's '*own initiative*' seems to be informed by his own views and reflections thus challenging the 'social' aspect of what the organisation is undertaking, seemingly a growing challenge for many social enterprises (Helmsing, 2015).

For Richard, it was his formative years that had a significant impact upon his values development and his coming to responsible leadership. This was also the case for Will whose aspirations for leading a business responsibly were primarily brought about as a result of an upbringing in a Quaker boarding school. As with Richard this was a social process that occurred over time and was not a specific experience.

Will founded, and is the MD of, BI Rehab, a limited company providing specialist IT support services to individuals with a brain injury. He and his organisation have a reputation for being wholly client centred and prioritising this aspect above profit. His organisation employs four people and has a small team of associates delivering services across the north of the UK.

Will immediately refers to his time at a Quaker boarding school when asked to reflect on why he has developed the leadership approach he uses:

*Will: Certainly I think going to a Quaker school was a big deal. Because it was a boarding school and I was a boarder and as they go it wasn't that bad. Quaker schools are very enlightened even though it was a boarding school so you are not with your family. The thing was The Society of Friends, as it is called, is all about respecting individuals and seeing what is good in people and kind of understanding that. The way they put it in religious terms they talk about the light of god in people, what that means is seeing what is good in someone and focusing in on that element.*

RL Interview dated 02/11/2017

It is clear to see from his language that Will does not see himself as a Quaker as he refers to them in the third person. However, the values and practice of Quaker life clearly had a significant influence on Will as is further indicated in the passage below:

*Will: The other things they have is these Quaker meetings as you may have heard of, where anyone can stand up and talk about anything. I can recall a vast array of discussion points that you absorb and it becomes a philosophy of life and it was a lot more meaningful than the Church of England upbringing that my parents exposed me to.*

RL Interview dated 02/11/2017

It is hard to interpret specifics from this commentary, but it is clear Will adopted much of the Quaker philosophy as his own and that the Quaker principles around learning and sharing may also have proved to be a mechanism for communication that he would go on to adopt. Certainly, the values of respecting others and focusing on the 'good' in people are clearly indicated. These values and approach are also evidenced from comments made by one of SWs staff members:

*Trudy: He made me feel really valued as I often lack confidence. I feel because of his approach I can be completely honest and don't need to over egg my abilities. So, I felt valued and supported and he reassured me by sharing his own experiences and how they were similar to mine and he wasn't always confident either.*

Employee Interview dated 13/07/2016

Openness is an approach used by Will here, sharing his own experiences, developing empathy and demonstrating value and respect for his colleague. Will comments that this approach to leadership based on mutual respect, openness and value for all staff (attributes of authentic leaders (Azanza, Moriano, & Molero, 2013)) is linked directly to his time at the Quaker school:

*Will: I think it is about learning to respect other people and believing in a flat hierarchy, which can be confusing as Quakers do have a hierarchy but they have an interesting approach. If you participate in a Quaker meeting they have a very unusual approach where there is free discussion until one person might suggest that they have reached a conclusion and if no one objects then this is accepted, however if anyone is less than OK with this then the meeting continues until there is a consensus. This illustrates how trying to reach consensus with all on board is the way.*

*The way I want to run the business is that I do want everyone to have a say regardless of how important they feel they are, everyone I feel has something to contribute. So, the school has had quite a big effect on how I run the business.*

RL Interview dated 02/11/2017

Will's egalitarian values are expressed here indicating that everyone has something of value to contribute regardless of who they are and that much of his business practice is linked to a philosophy developed from his time at the Quaker school. The Quaker approach to meetings where all participants have an equal voice (Western, 2013) is akin to Habermas's (2015) deliberative democracy, adopting consensus decision making and democratic rule. The intention being that where this approach is applied the greater the likelihood that moral decisions will be made (ibid). This approach would be appropriate, particularly where Quaker values include equality

and truth in their philosophy (Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 2018) and where they have practiced a flat structure with no hierarchy for over 350 years. With a focus on spiritual consensus there is much Eco-leaders can learn from the Quakers (Western, 2013).

#### **4.2.3 RLs Born of Mentorship**

Of the two remaining RLs within the project, both had similar journeys to each other in coming to responsible leadership. These similarities were around values instilled within the family environment and having a professional mentor recognise their potential and coaching their route into responsible leadership. Also, of note, is that these two RLs were not founders of the organisation they lead but were recruited by the aforementioned mentor to fulfil that leadership role. This is in contrast to the previous five RLs who were all the founders of their respective organisations and all five cite coming to RL as a result of an influential experience or period in their life. Peter is one of the RLs who came into this role as a result of mentorship and is the MD of Enable, a social enterprise who positively discriminates in employing people with disabilities - employment creation for disadvantaged individuals is the organisation's primary mission. The organisation employs around 25 staff and provides tele-research services primarily to the public and third sectors. Peter was recruited as a project manager by a third sector organisation based in Sheffield. The leader of this third sector organisation Phil, was a well known social activist with political connections and was heavily involved in advocating for, and seeking to empower, people with disabilities. Phil ran numerous third sector organisations and was entrepreneurial in networking and building social enterprise capacity across South Yorkshire.

As can be seen below, Peter was not particularly seeking a role in the third sector and lacked focus around his career when he was offered a position by Phil (who would go on to mentor Peter into his role as MD of a social enterprise).

*Peter: I had met Phil (mentor) at BAG and he offered me a job basically, so I can't say I was inspired to specifically work in the third sector, I fell into it basically. But I can see that having known nothing about social enterprises or the voluntary sector I could soon see it was good and I needed to give*

*something a proper go or I might end up with no career. I could see that a lot of the stuff Phil was doing with BAG was very inspiring you could see where there was a gap for me if I could get something working, which I did.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Here Peter is demonstrating some entrepreneurial characteristics in spotting the opportunity and seeing the potential for a future role for himself (Bolton & Thompson, 2004) and recognising the mission and vision of Phil and the organisation he was soon to create were aligned with his own interests. We can see deeper into Peter's drivers with his response to a further question around whether he had gone on to adopt his values from Phil or if these values were already present within himself:

*Peter: I think the later, because I have always had values of fairness and wanting to help people. But in terms of recognising that there are parts of society who aren't as better off as me, I have had from my parents and also going to church when I was younger and in particular from my mum a strong socialist upbringing stressing that we vote labour in this house. Because in very simple terms we were told from a young age, why don't we like the Tories, well because they don't care about people without money. And that is where I have come from so that is where I have my bottom line of my values. So, coming into this sector wasn't alien to me in that sense, it felt the sort of thing I felt comfortable in working on, my eyes were wide open. Although my work life experience was limited but I think there are personal values that align well and I have taken those values and tried to make them work, much of which also came from Phil and much of that is similar but we also differ on some things.*

*So, I think I held some of those values before but perhaps not to the extent that I do now.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

With this deeper understanding of Peter's early life, it is clear he holds a self-identity as a socialist and that this was brought about from his family life in his formative years. With this as his history, it would seem he has recognised many shared values with Phil and over time has further explored and expanded upon these socialist views whilst working with Phil. It would be reasonable to assume that Phil had

identified these values in Peter and this led to the initial offer of a role as a project manager. This interpretation is reaffirmed when Peter goes on to comment:

*Peter: Those values of creating opportunity in employment and positively influence our employees' lives, they have become my values. If I am honest, at the start I wouldn't have disagreed with them but I fell into leading the organisation. However, Phil who started the whole thing off he did have a burning desire to do good in the world. So now they are my values.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

and further commentary from a Board member of the Social Enterprise where Peter is the MD:

*Chris: Some of the things that he has said indicate that he is 'left leaning' for want of a better description. They (his family) wouldn't support the Tories and so on. So, I think this reflects his personality and he is a decent bloke and it would be ridiculous for him to try and be anything else. There are some of us who realise there is more to life than making money. I don't think he looks at Enable and sees wider opportunities he just wants to do the decent thing.*

Financial Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

We can reasonably conclude from this that these perhaps dormant values of socialism and positively influencing other's lives within Peter were recognised, re-kindled and nurtured by Phil in bringing him to his current role as MD of a social enterprise and a RL. This is particularly apparent when we learn that Peter was initially recruited as a project manager and that this then led into him becoming the MD:

*'We were a project that span off and I became MD by default as the project manager'*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

From this, we can further interpret how Phil has spotted Peter as a potential RL and has effectively given him a job assignment (the project manager role) to assess and develop him (Ohlott, 2004) with the potential to then spin out the project as a full blown independent organisation with Peter at the helm, which is exactly what has happened.

The second of the two mentored RLs is Wesley who leads a business unit within Better Communities, a large social enterprise. This business unit delivers community-based health care services through public sector funded contracts. This provision is strategically managed by Wesley and a small team and is delivered through collaborative partners across South Yorkshire.

Wesley indicates his family upbringing and like-minded people as a factor in influencing his desire to work in the third sector:

*Wesley: I come from a family who are land agents and work in the non-profit sector so I like business, but the people who I work with, which might be the council or the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and generally in this sector. Well I personally chime with those people and what they do. That is the main driver for me here I just feel comfortable in an organisation like this and it gets the best out of me.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Having shared or similar values to the people he is working with is an important factor for Wesley and being in the non-for profit sector it would seem he sees as a setting where he is more likely to come across people with similar values. When questioned about the source of these values, Wesley indicates a combination of mentorship from the CEO Carl at his current organisation (at the time of interview Wesley was in his 12<sup>th</sup> year here) and his family and personal life during his formative years:

*Wesley: One, is down to my boss Carl and his support as a person. He is the CEO and is very much a lefty and is very much a mentor to me and helped me develop. Also, a lot of it comes down to my own upbringing as well, it is about my grandpa who was a liberal from the war years and he was very much about having respect for people. It is very much about thinking differently. It's about having respect for people and having integrity and it is about having a strong work ethic that I get from my Dad. I am a grafter and I put in the hours. So, lots of it is down to my upbringing and the peers that I had as a kid.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

The values of mutual respect, integrity and a strong work ethic are cited as important factors by Wesley and that upbringing and the community he existed in



had an important part to play in instilling these values as a young person. The reference to the influence of his CEO's mentorship and his 'lefty' values would indicate socialist views as having a part to play in Wesley's rationale for working in the third sector and being a RL.

Within his collaborative working, it would seem that Wesley communicates and acts on his values in a meaningful way as reported by the leader of one of the partner organisations he is contracting with. The partner leader's response to why he thinks Wesley is working in this sector demonstrates this well:

*Hue: I think he has a genuine concern, he wants to see the best outcome for people at the end of the line. What we might call the 'underclass' or consider disadvantaged Wesley has a real concern for these people and not leaving them behind. He wants to support them and enable them to achieve what they can. This is what I have picked up along the way in meetings and so on.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

This combination of values instilled during childhood and further mentoring as a professional have influenced Wesley in his approach to leadership. This has led to him becoming a RL and that this is readily identifiable by those he works with.

#### **4.2.4 Internalised Social Betterment Values - Macro and Micro**

Explored briefly above was the notion of RLs 'knowing' what they are doing is the right thing to do and that this is fuelled by a set of internalised values around an aspiration for social betterment. These values are internalised motivations that influence and inform opinions, attitudes and behaviours (Feather, 1985; Rokeach, 1973; Williams, 1979) although there is no wholly accepted interpretation of the term (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016). As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, these social betterment values found in the RLs studied fall into macro (aspirations to improve the world) and micro (aspirations to improve people's lives) categories. Detailed in this section are comments specific to this theme which demonstrate these values within the RLs studied.

This social betterment aspiration is made explicit by Richard when asked what he set out to achieve by creating the organisation he leads:

*Richard: Green Partners is a utopian project that can never be fully achieved.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

This aspiration for a move toward a utopia is given more meaning when we understand the stated mission of the organisation:

*Richard: To create a mutual local economy, being one that has a coop at its heart, that enables the equitable redistribution of surplus value that is created by the production of goods and services.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

These two statements indicate an aspiration toward a more egalitarian society with equitable distribution of wealth with a worldly focus. Where Richard indicates that his work will never be fully achieved, it is apparent that for him it is about the journey and not solely the destination. This could be his 'pilgrimage' as defined by Palmer (1999) who indicates this as a route to fulfilment and that listening to one's own voice and prioritising this above other voices are aspects of a person who has found their vocation. We can see further links between the organisation's purpose and Richard's own value set in his response to questions on if and how his values influence the way he runs the organisation:

*Richard: It is fair to say that they do, I think it is also accurate given the question that Green Partners is an embodiment of what I want to do with my life. It is because I have committed a lifetime savings, my wife describes Green Partners as my first child.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

Richard's aspiration for society and his organisation are grand in scale and intrinsically linked with who he is as an individual. He indicates that he does not necessarily see an end to his endeavour but the journey he is on, for him, is a worthy one. It would appear that Richard has found and is living his vocation (Palmer, 1999).

Turning to other RLs in the project, on enquiring about Lewis's values he replies:

*Lewis: I don't know that values exist in an ongoing sense, I just know that the world could be so much better. And I worry that we as a species are going down a really dodgy path and we are not prepared for it.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

When pushed to describe the values of his organisation he takes a little time to reflect and then comments:

*Lewis: I don't know how I would describe it other than something really woolly like 'want the world to be a better place'.*

*I don't think that if you didn't want the world to be a better place and a fairer place you would come and work at Arts for All anyway.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

It was clear during the interview that Lewis was a deep thinker with a keen interest in philosophy. This was made apparent in his reflections around values as a concept and his not wanting to be too specific as within his philosophy this did not really fit. However, we can see from his comments that the language he uses would suggest an internalised value '*I just know*' and that this is worldly in aspiration '*want the world to be a better place*'. This statement and Lewis's other comments would indicate a philosophy and values akin to the social activist and writer Wendell Berry (1972, p. 164) who's values summation echoes Lewis's, 'There is only one value; the life and health of the world'.

Martha cites her religious beliefs as instrumental in her values of responsibility to the world:

*Martha: I believe that I have a responsibility to steward this world and I guess that comes back to my religion as well.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Martha's recognition of stewardship as a mechanism for leadership would align with Hernandez's (2012) view where others (e.g. society, stakeholders) are prioritised above personal gain and that the steward does this from a 'moral obligation and compulsion to positively influence the collective' (Hernandez, 2012, p. 175). It is also recognised as a key role of RLs by Maak and Pless (2006b) along with other values based roles e.g. servant, citizen and coach. This view is supported in her follow up comments to this statement where she explores these values a little deeper and it is clear that she sees her approach to leadership as an internalised part of her being:

*Martha: I would add that this whole thing is a lifestyle it is much more than coming to work. It is being a leader in the community its being a leader with*

*everyone I engage with be it in the shop or on a night out. It is a bigger thing, I think if you are privileged enough to have leadership skills then you have to be responsible for that and you have to steward them. So, my entire lifestyle (laughs) it is just who I am.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Significantly influenced from an abusive childhood Bridget's comments exemplify her values and aspirations for macro social betterment:

*Bridget: I want every child to understand they are not a victim but they are the power to change the world. I do this in the kindergartens but I also do it by telling the grown-ups on training that they are free from oppression too - they have to believe it and see it from a different perspective. I want to be the catalyst for magical self-transformation and plant the seeds of change in everyone I encounter and for them to do the same.*

RL Interview dated 28/11/2017

She further demonstrates these values in her comments on her organisation's stakeholders:

*Bridget: ...other Stakeholders would be people who have their own innate desire to change the world.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

Will's intrinsic values are made clear in his response to questioning around why he goes beyond expectations and contract obligation in his support to staff and service delivery to his clients:

*Will: Because I can. Because it helps me get the most out of the relationship, and I enjoy my relationships with my clients and their families, I enjoy getting something back and if you listen to someone you get something back from them. Which is what they want, they want to be engaging. Which is interesting as it sounds like I am doing it for myself, I think the reason.... when I see people who don't listen, my thoughts are, why aren't you listening? This person is trying to talk to you. It is what we do as human beings.*

*Interviewer: It is like a default position for you?*

*Will: It is completely a default position for me.*

We can interpret from Will's comments that for him it is a norm or internalised approach, adopted from the Quaker philosophy, to take time to truly listen and engage with the people around him, to value their contribution and that not taking this approach would seem wrong (Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 2018). He also recognises the value in this approach both to himself in job satisfaction and also to those around him who as a result feel truly valued (which they are), demonstrating attributes of authentic leadership (Azanza et al., 2013). It is likely that his formative years attending a Quaker boarding school, where he developed many of his values, have contributed significantly to his approach to responsible leadership. Focusing on his aspirations for social betterment, it is clear that this is at the individual level (micro) and improving the lives of those around him.

The two following RLs within the project were those who came to responsible leadership through mentorship and also indicated family influences in their social betterment values formation, for Peter, we can see from his earlier comments that he held values around wanting to help people and fairness from an early age and that this was linked to influences from parents and religion '*I have always had values of fairness and wanting to help people*'. With this backdrop it would seem that his mentor (Phil), who demonstrates a desire to improve the world, has identified and recruited Peter to further his worldly aspirations, perhaps because he identified Peter as a higher purpose leader (Jackson & Parry, 2011) during his mentorship. Certainly, with Peter developing his values from his mentor's this has happened, although it is not possible to discern if this was the intention of the mentor:

*Peter: those values of creating opportunity in employment and positively influence our employees' lives, they have become my values. If I am honest, at the start I wouldn't have disagreed with them but I fell into leading the organisation. However, Phil who started the whole thing off, he did have a burning desire to do good in the world. So now they are my values.*

The mentor Phil (a well-known social entrepreneur) is indicated as wanting to improve the world indicating a macro social betterment aspiration. However, for

Peter, his indicated aspiration, also aligned with social betterment, is focused on individuals or groups and thus a micro focus in comparison to his mentor's.

For the other mentored RL within the study (Wesley), we see that he too has been significantly influenced by his mentor and also family life when growing up.

When asked about the origin of his values he comments:

*Wesley: One, is down to my boss Carl and his support as a person. He is the CEO and is very much a lefty and is very much a mentor to me and helped me develop. Also, a lot of it comes down to my own upbringing as well, it is about my grandpa who was a liberal from the war years and he was very much about having respect for people.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Perceptions of stakeholders involved with Wesley also give us an insight into his values:

*Hue: You quickly develop a feel for people and I think he is very definitely in the job he is for the right reasons.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

As with Peter there is a backdrop of family influence that has instilled a set of values around respect for and wanting to help people and that these values have then been nurtured in a professional setting by a mentor engaged in social betterment. For Wesley this would indicate a socialist view brought about from his boss whom he indicates as a 'lefty'. Although not directly commented upon in the interview, public information on the organisation Wesley works for shows that his mentor has grown the organisation from a start-up in 1999 to its current status of employing over 100 people and managing over £25M of contracts annually. Although not specifically commented upon within the data, this would imply that Wesley's mentor's social betterment focus is beyond micro and possibly macro. Whereas Wesley's social betterment focus would seem to be at an individual or micro level:

*Wesley: It all comes down to who I am as a person. I like to work with people at a single level. It is very much I want to treat people how I would be treated myself and it is about that partnership approach as you work together and the best way to achieve your objective is about partnership.*

#### 4.2.5 Chapter Conclusions

All seven RL's in the study came to responsible leadership as a result of their increased awareness of need in others and an internalised value system aligned with social betterment. Establishment of these values was linked to experiences and influence during the RLs childhood and/or formative years. For five of the RLs this was as a result of an instrumental personal experience e.g. *"and that changed everything and if nature has that ability to transform someone so magically then I want to be a part of it"*. These five went on to establish and run their own organisation.

The remaining two RLs in the study were both influenced during their upbringing by family members (Bobowik et al., 2011) who held values that are associated with social betterment and equality e.g. *"we were told from a young age, why don't we like the Tories, well because they don't care about people without money"*. They have then gone on to a professional setting where they were recognised, nurtured (Ohlott, 2004) and further influenced by a mentor with responsible leadership values. This mentor effectively recruited what they saw as an individual with appropriate values and the potential to lead and manage a team. Also made apparent during the project was a clear distinction between two types of RL. Those who have had an instrumental experience and are led to direct action of their own volition and those who have grown up in a world of RL values and are then mentored into a responsible leadership role. Thus, the two types of RL are the five entrepreneurial RLs who have had an instrumental experience(s) in their formative years and the two mentored RLs who were recognised for their potential and brought into the role.

The aspiration for social betterment and improving people's lives constituted the 'what' dimension of responsible leadership and was at a macro level for four of the RLs (Richard, Lewis, Martha and Bridget) and at a micro level for three (Will, Wesley and Peter), thus also indicating an aspect of the 'who' dimension of RL. Noticeable within the analysis was that all four of the macro betterment RLs came to

responsible leadership as a result of an instrumental experience and have all established their own organisation.

Of further interest here is that the two RLs who came to responsible leadership through mentorship both had micro social betterment aspirations but were employed by mentors who held macro social betterment aspirations. Thus, six of the seven RLs in the study are at some level involved in a project to influence society at large (the 'who' dimension). This global perspective would align with Maak and Pless's (2008, p. 60) descriptor of RLs who they see as 'agents for world benefit'.

The table below (4.2) gives an overview of the findings presented in this chapter, with the five main themes cross referenced with the seven RLs included in the study:

**Table 4-2 Overview of Chapter 4 Findings**

Participant RL	Peter	Richard	Wesley	Lewis	Martha	Bridget	Will
Theme							
Influence from personal experience (why)		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Influence from significant mentor (why)	✓		✓				
Internalised social betterment/RL values (what)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Desire to improve people's lives (who)	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Desire to improve the world (who)		✓		✓	✓	✓	

As can be seen in the figure above, all RL participants indicate an external influence (mentorship or experience) as a key driver in their becoming a responsible leader and all of the RLs have an expressed desire to want to improve the lives of others, although this may be at the micro (other people) or macro (the world) level. Clearly indicated across the sample was the indication of internalised social betterment values within all of the RLs.



An important caveat to include here is that although the figure above indicates where participants and/or their stakeholders have implied or stated that a driver is present, this does not specifically indicate that a driver is not present where it is not indicated. This simply demonstrates that it was not commented upon or expressed within the data collection interviews. With the nature of semi-structured interviews being largely driven by the participants within a loose structure it is impossible to know how responses will fall.

The conclusions detailed above indicate a number of themes as summarised in the table. These themes or drivers give a clear insight into what has brought the RLs in the project to responsible leadership. This is the 'why' dimension of RL and indicates the antecedents and motivation for coming to and being a responsible leader.

For the five entrepreneurial RLs this was directly linked to experiences in their formative years where they came to recognise that there are others in the world that are significantly disadvantaged and need help. As a result of this experience (antecedents) they have developed a set of internalised personal values that has driven them to action. This is to support or alleviate suffering/disadvantage in others. The mentored RLs indicate their coming to RL as an embodiment of the personal values they hold was nurtured and instilled in them during their upbringing, their parental and family values being closely aligned with social betterment and equality. These internalised personal values of social betterment and equality are the RLs motivator and coupled with the antecedent experiences in their youth/formative years define the 'why' dimension of responsible leadership. The alleviation of suffering and disadvantage, pursuit of social betterment and equality are 'what' the RLs have taken responsibility for and thus define this dimension.

It became apparent during the analysis that the personal values that brought the RLs to responsible leadership were also heavily influential in their approach to leadership at a strategic and operational level. This leadership practice or 'being' a RL is explored in the next chapter.

## **5 Findings: Being a Responsible Leader**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter has presented the evidence around why individuals become responsible leaders, what they believe they are responsible for and to whom. Within this was an exploration of the values, drivers and aspirations of the RLs involved in the project. To understand the concept of responsible leadership further this chapter will present findings on how these values, drivers and aspirations become manifest within the practice of the RL, exploring the 'how' dimension of RL. With practice as the focus, much of the commentary from the RLs and stakeholders found in this chapter is focused on the governance of their organisation (e.g. duties and responsibilities of leaders in managing the organisation and its interactions with stakeholders (Pass, 2004)) and behaviours of the RL and how this is informed by their values. These values being a construct of the person's attributes (traits, emotions, attitudes and motives) their environment (the situation the person is in) (Nedelko & Brzozowski, 2017) and that the interactionism (Bowers, 1973) of these two aspects serves to inform the individual's behaviour.

This chapter is presented in three sections that align with the themes identified within the project. The first theme presented in the following section, demonstrates that RL decisions and behaviours are directly linked with the RL's social betterment values and have informed the organisation's purpose. These are the same RL values that were made evident in the previous chapter. The second theme details how RLs culturally embed in their organisation their values and vision for social betterment. In the final section the third theme identified demonstrates how RLs utilise their human and social capital as resources to further their social betterment aspirations. Together these three themes respond to the research objective of how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

#### **5.1.1 Social Betterment Behaviours**

The focus of decisions, behaviours and activities of the RLs in the project were aligned with their organisational purpose. This mission, vision or aim of the

organisation was often generated and communicated by the RL in question and was aimed at social betterment. When asked, all stakeholders were readily au fait with the purpose of the organisation they were employed by or associated with.

Here Lewis tells the story of how his organisation purpose was derived:

*Lewis: We finished Uni and were asking the question what were we going to do with our time now and what is of value. So we were thinking about how our view of the world had been affected by our experience of what we might loosely call creative information, what might be an art form, a philosophically written article, an article in a paper and how those component experiences had enabled us to have a good viewpoint on the world. So we thought is it worth while trying to add to that and we thought yes.*

*Lewis: Over the years we have become more interested in a more systemic impact. So rather than.... say we are going to oppose fracking in Sheffield, which would be a symptom of a wider issue, and the argument follows that you follow things down to their root and what you find at the end is an individual and if you can affect individuals and an individual's experience you can arguably you are making that sort of systemic attack or change on people's perception of the world and their perception of right and wrong and that has become really important for us.*

*Recently we are looking at reflective citizenship as a set of projects in 2018. Based on the idea that if you can get an individual to be reflective and reflect upon themselves the output of that is often empathy for the other, with that presumably becomes a more empathetic approach to who you might vote for and what you might consider to be of value in your life.*

*We play a central role in facilitating arts and culture in terms of print delivery in Sheffield. This is to public locations like Drs Waiting rooms*

*and any public space where there is footfall. In total now we have 4-5 thousand distribution points.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

Within his comments it was uncertain as to what role Lewis took in this continuing process, this was made clear:

*Interviewer: Interesting. The wording you use there is often 'we', so were you the catalyst of this? Was anyone the figure-head?*

*Lewis: Yes it was me absolutely. And yes I came up with the initial approach back in 2005 and led the company the whole way through.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

This use of language by Lewis (we rather than I) could be seen as an indicator of his egalitarian values and approach, which he goes onto comment on:

*Lewis: So for me using the word 'we' is an important part of that because a leader is only someone with an initial idea and drive to motivate others to help. So I don't see it as an ongoing role just as an often cropping up role, is how I see it. So for me the idea is that everyone has the same level of agency in an organisation.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

For Lewis the purpose and activities of his organisation are to challenge people to think deeper about themselves and society and to do this on their own terms as a result of reflections on an experience facilitated by Lewis's organisation. Within this his approach to leadership has elements of distributive leadership (Northouse, 2015) in that all staff have equal 'agency' and say within the organisation, from Lewis's perspective. He also implies a notion of leadership as a temporary construct and that the 'we' is of more significance than any individual, including himself. This would indicate an element of relational leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011) where the leader leads in a way that is in relation with their colleagues and thus they become morally accountable to them. Cunliffe and Eriksen's concept of relational leadership recognises the importance of mundane daily activities and subtly using these as a mechanism to inform and to lead as key features of relational leadership.

With the application of a flat pay rate across the organisation, the financial reward could be an overt gesture of how all staff have equal agency and thus Lewis's relationship with all staff is that of an equal as he is working with them. He does not want to be seen as the leader as within his philosophy this notion is built on a power asymmetry that is in direct contradiction of his anti-establishment, equal agency values.

Within the previous chapter Richard stated the purpose of his organisations as:

*Richard: Green Partners is a utopian project that can never be fully achieved.*

*To create a mutual local economy, being one that has a coop at its heart, that enables the equitable redistribution of surplus value that is created by the production of good and services.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

It is no surprise that we see the same data presented here as was in the previous chapter when we consider Richard's view of his organisation is:

*Richard: Green Partners is an embodiment of what I want to do with my life.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

There is little separation between who Richard sees himself as and what his organisation does, the two are very closely intertwined and this is recognised by Richard:

*Richard: ...my wife describes Green Partners as my first child.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

and also by other members in the coop:

*David: Because Richard is Green Partners in so many ways he is there the whole time and has invested a huge amount of time in Green Partners.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/05/2017

When asked to talk more specifically about the activities of the coop Richard responds:

*Richard: On a week to week basis it is about having an on-going conversation and recognising there are certain values, like the veg box scheme for example is seasonal, local, organic and there is always conversations about how we have to achieve at least one of those and if that is the case why only one. Organic is a must, other factors less so. That is where Mary the box manger will hold certain values and strategic goals as in what we do.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

This comment would imply an overall focus for the organisation but that this is also open to interpretation by individuals/members within the coop. As with Lewis's comments above this would indicate an element of distributed leadership (Northouse, 2015) which would be consistent with the democratic values of a cooperative (Co-operatives UK, 2017). The manager Richard mentions above (Mary) comments on the organisation purpose, but from a more operational perspective:

*Interviewer: Why does Green Partners exist? If it was successful what would it have done and for who?*

*Mary: I think it is successful. Well from my point of view it is successful in helping people get access to locally grown food. So it is people who are interested in local organic food and produce and who want to support the local economy and local farmers. Green Partners does lots of other stuff as well and it is about making a great environment and improving our community for people to have fun, eat well and be healthy. We are also doing well if we are creating work opportunities and helping people to start work.*

Partner Worker (Manager) Interview dated 26/04/2017

It can be seen that Richard's leadership of the co-op has taken it forward in-line with his personal values and aspirations, he states himself it is an '*embodiment of what I want to do with his life*'. In real terms this manifests as a worker cooperative

focused on local, healthy, food and drink provision. However, there is a dichotomy here, Richard indicates the co-op as his life project and that it is of his creation of which he is the strategic lead. He also comments that he is the only major financial investor.

*Richard: The reality is that I am still the only major investor in Green Partners – financially speaking.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

The data above would indicate that the ownership of the co-op was primarily Richard's in financial and psychological terms. However this does not align with the values and principles of a cooperative organisation which is strategically led and run by all of its members (Co-operatives UK, 2017). Perhaps this lack of alignment is born of the founding of Green Partners that was a sole private venture by Richard and then evolved overtime to be a shared endeavour of like-minded individuals (as discussed in the previous chapter) and became a coop. It could be that Richard is attracted to the notion of a cooperative as it is aligned to his utopian aspirations and political beliefs, but at the same time his self-interested entrepreneurial behaviours (Kets de Vries, 1985) have taken him down a road that gets the results he, as an individual, values. This dichotomy is explored further in the next section.

When asked, Martha indicated her organisation's objectives as:

*Martha: Our objectives are to do with making the performing arts accessible to everyone, they are to do with working nationally and internationally with vulnerable people of all ages and they are to do with working in partnership with different community groups and groups within the city... and coming back to my personal values I have very strong social, ethical, political and personal values and I am a socialist at heart.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

She then talks more on operational activities:

*Martha: We are providing alternative education provision for kids who are not attending school, we offer a safe space for those kids where they can develop and be themselves. So we provide education in a creative*

*way. For some we can be the difference in them going back into school and them staying out of school. So we are developing confidence in kids, social skills and supporting the schools. So we bring crime down and support local community cohesion.*

*So it is about belonging to a community as this is what we are trying to create for our kids and you will hear the kids say 'the The Stage family' and for me that is important especially when they come from less functional families.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Enquiring on why does The Stage exist, an interviewed staff member responds:

*Elaine: I think it is because there is always going to be young people who feel they are lost and don't have a place in society and I think The Stage is there for those young people mainly and also for the creative side it is there, for people to express themselves but it is a place where people can feel safe and wanted. Because they are genuinely wanted here, no matter what bad behaviour they express, no matter what they do they will always be welcome here. And I think that is really important for the local community that people know that is what we are and who we are and it is important for our teenagers to know that as well.*

Employee Interview dated 03/05/2017

This view is echoed by a manager within the organisation:

*Heidi: So it is unconditional love for young people and children that don't already have it. OK that is my vision and for people not just young people, and using drama to facilitate that. That would be my view. So for instance we never turn a student away or criticise something or who they are, we would never try and change them. And that is something that we are very clear on. Also about trying to get performing arts and accessible education to those that wouldn't already have it. That is one of Martha's points, trying to get education to those that haven't got it.*

Manager Interview dated 03/05/2017



The comments above give a clear picture of the organisation's activities around education for young people who may be challenged in accessing mainstream education provision. To achieve this, the performing arts are used as an accessible medium of education and social skills development. Also apparent within the comments is an implication that there is a significant element of pastoral care afforded to the young people supported by this organisation. The ever present element of 'love', or unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957) for the beneficiaries is apparent in staff members' and the RL's comments.

RL Bridget links her values very closely with the purpose of the organisation:

*Bridget: I think right from when The Learning Tree was set up my angle was always the values perspective, it was always about people and stakeholders and not just what that means for now this minute but the added value for those people (our learners) and when they go on to grow independently of us.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

She then goes on to talk about her organisation's provision of forest schools training for teachers and outdoor educators and how the provision her organisation offers is superior to other providers:

*Bridget: People ask me 'what do you do' and I say I train people in forest schools and they go 'what's that'. So actually having an end product I can say to those attending the training, this is what your journey can look like, you can have an influence on education. So they have then got a bit of a vision that they can buy into.*

*Because the quality and standard we offer is at the top level. So people can pay less for something that looks similar but simply end up with a certification and not the personal transformation of themselves which is what we offer.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

We can interpret from this that Bridget is offering a service of personal transformation within a broader marketplace and that she links this with her own

values and drivers. This vision of the organisation is also shared by staff members:

*Paula: And ultimately that is why we exist is to enrich the lives of those that are involved in The Learning Tree.*

Employee Interview dated 08/02/2016

*Martin: Well the thing that attracted me to this org was that it was more than a business and was more than a transaction business and was there to create something more meaningful - so we make money but only to make the business functional.*

*We are building something quite special and 10 years from now this could be something quite special and no one is doing anything as well as we are doing it. Also the staff are brilliant and you can trust everyone to do their bit without any concerns at all – this is very rare. At the heart of it there is something very meaningful happening here and more to come in the future.*

Employee Interview dated 03/03/2016

The personal transformation and emancipation indicated in the previous chapter by Bridget is clearly present in the aims and practice of the organisation and staff members are fully engaged with this approach. This could be as a result of Bridget's act of mentorship for those who may have suffered like she has (Thomas & Hall, 2008).

Will presents a very clear focus on what his organisation's purpose is and who it is supporting:

*Will: My first and last thought is that it is serving the clients. It is really important to be offering opportunities to individuals who have disabilities. Offering them an opportunity for self-actualisation, development, communication and moving away from isolation. Those are the people who I think about most when I am working.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

This clarity of focus is also present within two staff members interviewed when asked about the aims of the organisation:

*Trudy: It exists to help and support people with neuro disabilities, mainly through the use of IT.*

Employee Interview dated 13/07/2016

*Howard: I think Will is pragmatic and with his background in social care he knows there is a benefit to be had for people through the use of technology and that there is a need to support and train people in how to access the tech. So the approach is about enabling people who are in need to access the IT that can support them but do this in an understandable, bit by bit approach that is suited to the client. I think he truly sees and understands how the tech can help people and really wants this to make life better for them.*

Employee Interview dated 24/07/2016

Here we can see Will's focus is on enabling people with disabilities with the utilisation of IT and technology and that improving their lives is his and the organisation's driver. Prioritising clients above all other aspects of the business would indicate an element of servant leadership, 'service before self' (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 121).

The activities and focus of Peter's organisation are also clearly communicated:

*Peter: Enable was always a social enterprise as it is specifically about employing disadvantaged people. This is the only reason we existed. There was no business aspiration to do research it was about employment for people who couldn't get a job.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

The research Peter refers to above is the main activity of the organisation - this is undertaking tele-research for public and third sector clients. Important to highlight here is that unlike the RLs detailed above Peter was not the core founder of the organisation he manages. He is recorded as setting up the organisation at Companies House but as can be seen in the commentary below this process was

largely facilitated by the parent company BAG which was founded and run by Peter's mentor.

*Peter: Yes I did start it. It grew out of an organisation called BAG, which I joined in 2004. Where I was involved in various projects. Within that we tendered for some research with Sheffield Homes a customer satisfaction survey, we knew they wanted a social enterprise to do the work so felt we had a good chance and did win the tender. This was a 4 year piece of work. I managed the project and after about a year we picked up more work of this type and within two years we were sustainable in our own right and became a spin off company. This was the plan within BAG. So we were a project that span off and I became MD by default as the project manager. I hadn't thought this all through it just kind of happened.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

It is apparent that Peter was recruited into a project management post by his mentor whose values informed the founding and mission of the project, this has then grown and become an independent organisation. Thus Peter's mentor was the main influence in developing the aims of the organisation and the associated values, as was detailed in the previous chapter we can see that Peter has adopted these as his own:

*Peter: Well Phil (mentor) who started the whole thing off he did have a burning desire to do good in the world. So now they are my values.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Existing in a competitive market place Peter also comments on how his organisation competes on price and service and does not trade on its social enterprise status:

*Peter: However my position is that we should simply be competitive and the fact that we are a social enterprise is up to us, so it shouldn't impact the client.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

This clarity of the organisation's purpose and ethos is shared by staff:

*Chris: I think the whole ethos of Enable is to hire people who otherwise might have difficulty in gaining employment and he (Peter) has bent over backwards to accommodate people and their issues and challenges. That is part of the ethos of the organisation.*

Financial Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

Other stakeholders (a supplier here) also recognise the purpose of this organisation:

*Frank: Obviously their reason for its existence is twofold. One is that there is space in the market for small orgs to provide the services Enable provides, the second is that the people that work for them wouldn't have a chance in society if Enable didn't exist.*

Supplier Interview dated 05/12/2016

Although not as instrumental in the organisational purpose creation as other RLs in the study, we can still see that Peter is upholding the social betterment aims of the organisation he runs. It is also apparent that he shares these aspirations for the organisation and that they guide his practice as the organisational leader. Peter has brought his own values to the organisation and has then also adopted his mentor's internalising these to become his own thus ensuring the sustainability of the organisation (Kelman, 1958) as versioned by Peter's mentor Phil.

The second of the two RLs in the project who did not establish their own organisation and came to responsible leadership with the support of a mentor was Wesley. Wesley leads a business unit within a larger social enterprise. The focus of his department fits within the larger organisation's stated mission:

*'To enable and support local people through partnership working, to improve the quality of life for Sheffield residents'*

Organisation Annual Report 2016

Within this broad remit Wesley does see himself as having autonomy over what he does and how he does it:

*Wesley: I always struggled to find a place where I feel comfortable at work academically and corporately I love, for me it is the fluidity and its about being entrepreneurial as I can be quite entrepreneurial but not in*

*the private business sector way as I don't have that cutting edge. So I think this organisation gives me that freedom to follow up my own leads to run the business as long as it meets its financial obligations.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

It is also worth reflecting on comments from the previous chapter where Wesley indicated the origin of his values '*One is down to my boss Carl and his support as a person*'.

On asking what he sees as the driver for his business unit he replies:

*Wesley: So our values are collaboration and that is a big thing everyone works together. And this is challenging as we grown and have remote workers at other organisations but it is still key and that sense of team working and looking out for each other is very strong and we empower our senior workers to keep that moving forward. And I think within our partner organisations that sense of collaboration is good.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

We can see here that Wesley's focus is very much on collaborative working both internally and with partner organisations. When asked to talk about a typical project, the work his department does and how he leads becomes much clearer:

*Wesley: We engage with the beneficiaries from the outset and then build a service with them around their needs. So all our contracts are co-produced, so we have a series of outcomes that we decide and design together over a series of meetings in the project development stage. A good example would be a project in The Manor where the local community had a lot of suspoke about us, so we came in and spoke very openly about who we are. I led this piece of work as I am good at building relationships, we built trust, I listened to them, I was open about what we could and could not do.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

We can see from this that Wesley has an openness and aspiration to achieve outcomes that are driven by and are in the best interests of the beneficiaries.

Comments from a lead individual at one the partner organisations confirms this to be the case from their perspective:

*Hue: He is sympathetic and supporting of our aims but does have to sometimes put a brake on in his position as our needs may not always be able to be met within the project and Wesley will have to communicate that to us. I think Wesley is .... Because of who he is he wants to see the very best outcomes for all concerned and in the role he has this is all about managing this and also the expectations of partners/stakeholders.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

Reviewing the commentary in this section one realises again that there are two distinct responsible leadership types within the study, as suggested in the previous chapter. Of the five RLs who created their own business they have been the originator of the organisational purpose and have gone on to lead the organisation in achieving these aims. One could label these entrepreneurial responsible leaders. The other two RLs in the study, the mentored RLs, have been recruited to their post as they have been seen as an appropriate and responsible leader or manager. They have gone on to adopt and drive forward the aims of the organisations as established by their mentor who recruited them to the post. We can identify in their comments that they share the social betterment values of their mentor (Kelman, 1958) and the organisation that has been created. For the entrepreneurial RLs it is apparent from the comments above that they have generated and acted upon an organisational purpose that is wholly aligned with their values.

It is made clear in this section that the values of all RLs in the project, as indicated in the previous chapter, are those that inform the governance (Pass, 2004) of their organisation. This approach of values based leadership is recognised by Doh and Stumpf (2005b) as the first of three critical components of a RL, the other two being ethical decision making and quality stakeholder relationships. Within the commentary of the various stakeholders we can see that they have bought into the respective organisation's purpose and readily support the vision and aspiration of the RL they are a stakeholder of. This alignment of stakeholders and the RL/organisation values is seen as an indicator for success (Branson, 2008). This

inclusion of and high regard for stakeholders is recognised widely within the RL literature (Garriga & Melé, 2004; Jones et al., 2007; Miska et al., 2014; Pless & Maak, 2005) and is explored more thoroughly within the next section.

### **5.1.2 Culturally Embedding Values**

Whilst conducting the research interviews it became apparent to the researcher that there was a strong alignment between the RLs values and those of the organisation employees and other stakeholders. As the research and analysis progressed it became evident that the existence of this organisational culture was not by chance and that this occurred as a result of the RLs leadership approach. This element of their leadership was a 'natural process' (Schein, 2010, p. 196) and as such was their way of 'being' rather than a focus on a specific managerial problem(s). Leadership approach will inform culture which in turn will inform organisation performance (Berson, Oreg & Dvir, 2008). As concluded in the previous section the RL personal values informed, or were aligned with, the organisation's purpose. These values also permeated the organisation in a number of tangible and visible ways thus creating and reinforcing the organisational culture. The data indicated that this culture was group based and all members held the same basic assumptions (Schein, 2010). There was a demonstrable expectation that staff and stakeholders would commit to and share these values thus ensuring conformity to these basic assumptions. Also present were aspects of authentic leadership (Goffee & Jones, 2006) such as openness, humility and self-disclosure and that these too attracted others with similar values to the RL and their organisational culture (Azanza et al., 2013). Where employees or stakeholders did not align with these values there was an expectation that they would move on and it would appear they did so.

An example of this cultural embedding is the previously discussed egalitarian values of Lewis which are made real within his organisation in a demonstrable way. This is in his approach to salaries where all members of staff are paid exactly the same:

*Lewis: ... we have as an organisation decided to have a flat pay structure and pay everyone in the company the same hourly rate.*



*Interviewer: When and how was that decided?*

*Lewis: That was decided in 2008. There is a group within the members (company owners) that are pushing for the directors to have a better pay rate than the mainstream staff and the directors are resisting, which of course is very strange. We do have some recompense insofar as when at the end of the year we are in profit then people's overtime is paid and it tends to be the directors that work most of the overtime. If we are fortunate enough to have made a surplus. But essentially the flat rate is £8.45 for everyone and everyone is on a 37.5 hour contract.*

RL Interview dated 16/052017

On enquiring with a member of the organisation's staff why Lewis takes this approach we see they attribute this to his fundamental values:

*Jane: He's a good egg (laughs). It is his morals and principles that come before any concerns about finances. I suppose I've always been in support of the decision it is an important part of our ethos as the company and I have told other people who don't work for Arts for All that this is what we do. They are surprised and quite in awe of the fact that is how it is. I suppose there is a small part of me that would like a bit more money but only if everyone else was in line as well.*

Employee Interview dated 18/052017

Here we see for Lewis, his quest for an egalitarian society is made real within the boundaries and culture of the organisation he has created, where the equal value of all staff is communicated in monetary terms. Staff members indicate they are '*in support of the decision*' and clearly see this as a positive aspect of the organisational decision making. This would indicate a collaborative and empowering relationship between management and staff, thus sharing 'power with' staff members, rather than holding 'power over' staff members where the decision making is characterised by control and self-interest (Berger, 2005).

Other staff members demonstrate they share this view of an egalitarian structure for the organisation:

*Wayne: So as a group we are suspicious of that kind of centralised power I think, I think there is a shared value system that says where possible we shouldn't build up hierarchies and concentrate the power too much.*

*Interviewer: Does Lewis's underlying values around this, does it influence your relationship with him?*

*Wayne: Yes I think so. We came out of initially working as volunteers and then part time and Lewis was the first full time person. I was brought in through mutual friends and I was working on the magazine as a volunteer. So it does influence the way we work together.*

*Interestingly some of the members have argued that we should be paid more because we have more experience, responsibility, ability or skills but I don't think Lewis or I think in terms of value in that way, monetarily and that goes for staff to, if they didn't they are probably in the wrong company. And I think that it does increase the team spirit and we are a better company for it.*

Director Interview dated 25/052017

The influence from Lewis in the birth and early growth of the organisation is apparent and that to not share these values is a likely indicator that you are in '*the wrong company*'. This would indicate that holding these shared values is a strong preference for staff members, as is further evidenced by another staff member:

*Jane: I think if my personal values weren't aligned then I wouldn't be able to do my job.*

*Interviewer: How would you describe that alignment?*

*Jane: Someone who is concerned with helping other people who is not about financial gain.*

Employee Interview dated 18/052017

Lewis's further comments indicate that where staff members are wholly aligned with his values they are recognised and rewarded:

*Lewis: My view is that if someone is doing really well and they are keen to move forward then we invite them to become one of the directors and they can then start to see the bigger picture and opportunities.*

*Interviewer: That's interesting. So what does 'doing really well' mean?*

*Lewis: It means, well for Jason, he has taken an informal area of Arts for All that we supported and in 2015 we agreed he would have a go at making this work and generating enough revenue to pay his own salary, we would help but it was his task. And we gave him 6 months to do it and last year he generated £42k from this and it is all around poetry which is impressive. In doing so he has opened doors for the company as a whole and he has been fantastic and worked his arse off. So it seemed sensible.*

*Interviewer: On that do you look for individuals who have shared values?*

*Lewis: Yes. I don't think that if you didn't want the world to be a better place and a fairer place you would come and work at Arts for All anyway. When we are interviewing people for jobs we ask them what do they think of the work we do and why do they think it is important. This is usually a good indication as to whether they get it.*

RL Interview dated 16/052017

We can see from this that staff member's values are used as a recruitment aid and that this is the beginning of a cultural embedding of shared values across the organisation. Beyond this, for those staff who exemplify these values, they are recognised and rewarded with 'Director' status, further instilling the value set. This cultural value set is intrinsically linked with Lewis's leadership approach, personal values, his aspirations for the organisation and how it conducts itself. This is apparent where one of the director's comments on the value placed in Lewis's leadership:

*Wayne: If we were to lose Lewis it would be a very serious thing to try and restructure the company and not just in the practical sense but in the philosophical sense as well.*

Director Interview dated 25/052017

Ostensibly it would appear that Arts for All is an egalitarian organisation as indicated by its founder Lewis *'So for me the idea is that everyone has the same level of agency in an organisation'* and demonstrated by a flat pay rate for all staff. However within the comments of the participants it is apparent that Lewis is very much the decision maker and leader of the organisation. Even when colleagues espouse a wish not to *'centralise power too much'* it would appear this has happened. As a result Lewis and colleagues are failing to achieve some of their espoused aspirations around equality within the organisation. It is also apparent that some staff members have challenged the flat pay rate as they see it as inequitable, not taking into account skills, qualifications or experience that individuals bring to a role and thus should be rewarded for. However those in power (the directors) have *'resisted'* this as they do not see it as being aligned with their company ethos, asserting their views above that of other colleagues. It is also apparent that recruitment, retention and reward are at the behest of Lewis and his fellow directors with no formal system or equal opportunities approach/policy used to prevent application of value preferences. Beyond this, were Arts for All to be a wholly egalitarian organisation we would presume to see some democratic process in play around both leader selection and decision making around governance and management. However it would appear that the shared values of Lewis and the early volunteers who were involved in establishing the organisation have become the core value set used to govern the organisation and there is no discernible mechanism to include those who are not aligned with this, as a result, there is a disparity between the espoused values and demonstrable values. Although when we reflect on Lewis's earlier comments around why he was engaged in this *'whole thing'* he indicates an awareness of the subjectivity of values, aligned with Mackie (1990) and that he is working under an arrogant assumption, *'Arrogance in the assumption that what you are doing has value, which it may or may not depending on who you talk to, there is no objective*

*social values that I can think of*'. This would imply a level of awareness and content with this disparity between espoused and demonstrable values. It could be that this values disparity is a display of Rokeach's (1973) instrumental and terminal values, where Lewis is doing (instrumental value) what he feels is going to facilitate the achievement of the organisation's goals (terminal value) and thus is acceptable. Rokeach's work is perhaps dated, but empirical testing would indicate it is 'still applicable in modern society' (Tuulik et al., 2016, p. 158). However, if there is a shared vision and culture across the organisation then organisation performance is likely to be better than if there were disparate views (Kotter, 2008a). Perhaps this is the justification for Lewis's values disparity, particularly when we recognise that goal achievement is one of the highest ranked values of leaders (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) and as a result may feature more prominently in Lewis's thinking. It is also worth remembering that Arts for All is an organisation based in the creative sector seeking to challenge people (on their own terms) to think in new and potentially more empathetic ways. When we consider the factors detailed above it is somewhat ironic that there is only a limited tolerance of diverse and different ways of being in an organisation that espouses egalitarian and inclusive values.

The performing arts organisation (The Stage) supporting young people in education, had a very strong culture which was completely aligned with Martha's (the RL) values and had her positioned as the matriarch. This is well communicated by staff member Elaine.

*Elaine: So Martha works hard for us as well not just the business. She invests in us as people and it creates a family atmosphere, just like you want to make your mum proud its kind of similar. Because it comes from love, it's a bit mushy but it is true. So it does have that feeling of wanting to do well and receive that recognition from her. She is really knowledgeable anyway so that is one reason you want to be as good as her but also she really cares about you.*

*Interviewer: So why do you think she does it. Why do you think she takes this approach?*

*Elaine: Because it works. It empowers her employees and she wouldn't let us walk out of the door if we felt bad about anything that had happened in that day. She would stop us from going out of the door until we felt good about at least one thing that had happened in that day. And that filters through to everyone.*

Employee Interview dated 03/05/2017

Martha has established strong supportive relationships with her staff so much so that the word 'love' is used as a descriptor. She is supporting the well-being of her staff at an emotional level where she is taking a role of 'leader as therapist' (Western, 2013) and giving unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957), labelled as 'love,' as might be applied by a therapist or counsellor. Interestingly the word love was used by all three participants interviewed from this organisation and it was communicated as the number one value by the RL:

*Martha: So the first thing I often say to staff is that if you can't love unconditionally then you won't find this job easy. If you don't want to love unconditionally or you can't do this then you will find it very hard to work for us because of the people we work with and that is my number one rule. That is our number one value.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Martha's values are clearly at play within the early induction of staff and the need for them to share the value of unconditional love for the young people they work with. She also indicates an element of cultural induction during in-house training:

*Martha: And also we do regular training and one of the first things I say to staff is 'what is your ethos, why do you want to do this, for the money or the values'- we say we can't give them the money (Laughs).*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Elaine also indicates the recruitment process as a mechanism of sifting for shared values in applicants.

*Elaine: I think it is through the interview process she finds people that have similar personality values.*

Martha comments on her coaching approach to leadership and the need for staff to hold shared values:

Martha: One of the ways I do lead is through coaching, so every staff member gets coached by me. Then they *will coach each other as it goes down the organisation.*

*Generally I encourage them to make the decisions. Which comes back to the shared values aspect as this approach won't work if they don't have the same values. But they see that very quickly because if you try and self-lead without those values you will come up against something, not necessarily me but something. E.g. if they were teaching and decided to shout at a kid, they will realise very quickly that it isn't going to work. So I guess I encourage self-learning and self-leadership.*

This coaching approach to management is essentially the same as a therapist relationship where two people come together and the 'expert' will facilitate a discussion that will lead the counselling client to a deeper level of understanding or insight that will improve their well-being and potentially their behaviour (Western, 2013). We can see the power that is brought to bear as a result of this approach when we reflect back to the use of the word love, it would appear that the use of this word is not done so on a whim as the emotions one might associate with love are present within the staff members:

*Interviewer: Why do you work at The Stage and not somewhere else?*

*Elaine: I don't think that there is anywhere else I could ever work. Now that I have been here there is definitely nowhere, I couldn't. I am here because, lots of reasons, the whole job itself, Martha and the way she works and has trained her staff, the feeling of being around people that completely understand me and people that I understand in turn. Having people around me that are like-minded but have had completely different lives to me. It is really interesting, diverse, we meet lots of*

*different types of people constantly and it satisfies my need for a quick life and be really energetic and to be creative and be silly but also to be real emotionally and to be honest. All of that and I don't think there is another job in the world that would allow me to do all those things.*

Employee Interview dated 03/05/2017

Here Elaine demonstrates her total commitment to Martha and the organisation, a clear indicator that her values and that of Martha and the organisation are aligned. The level of values alignment was also explored with a manager in the organisation:

*Interviewer: Is there any alignment between the values of the organisation and your personal values?*

*Heidi: Well my personal values now are what The Stage is. Because I started with The Stage right back in the beginning before it was a full-time place. So those values, although I agreed with them in the beginning have become what I value for work as well and I think some of the other members of staff that has happened to them as well. Not that I want it to sound like a cult or anything but it does become that because using performing arts in the way we do, you can visually see, even within an hour of working with a challenging young person, you can see it having an effect.*

Manager Interview dated 03/05/2017

Here Heidi indicates that the significant positive impact the work the organisation does as being a medium of conversion to, or reinforcement of, the organisation's values and that this is akin to a cult environment. Ouchi's (1980) work on 'clans' would go some way to explaining the efficiencies and processes this tightly knit cultural alignment can bring, where groups of similar kinship (not necessarily blood relations) are created through a mechanism of socialisation that ensures a thorough alignment of individuals and the organisations goals. This shared focus becomes the principle reference point for all employees in going about their daily tasks and as a result requires little or no management or measurement of staff performance.



We can also see that Martha's leadership approach has a significant influence on Elaine and is an exemplar approach adopted by staff:

*Interviewer: So does Martha's style of leadership have a big influence on your relationship with her?*

*Elaine: Yes, massively. It has an impact on my relationships with the students, my relationships at home. The way that she works here I have actually taken some of those things and the way she thinks and the way she has trained us to think in terms of work, I have actually used this in my personal life as well.*

Employee Interview dated 03/05/2017

The pervading culture within Martha's organisation was very apparent across the conversations with Martha and her colleagues, so much so that there was a surfeit of evidence that could have been included within the reported findings. This was driven by Martha's therapist or coaching approach to leadership (Western, 2013) coupled with her demonstrations of unconditional positive regard or 'love' (Rogers, 1957). This relationship-centric approach to leadership and management is demonstrable of stewardship (Hernandez, 2012) as Martha herself recognised in the previous chapter.

Reflecting on Marsha's religious beliefs as a fundamental driver of her leadership approach, Zizek's (2012) work recognises the 'Holy Spirit' as an egalitarian community linked by mutual love and this was applied through the community's own responsibility and freedom. These mutual love and egalitarian values are apparent within the comments of the participants from The Stage. However Western (2013) advises caution when ascribing leadership motivation to an omnipotent spiritual force as history tells us this seldom ends well (e.g. where holy wars and conquests have been undertaken, often to serve a tyrant's wishes but ostensibly in the name of an omnipotent all-knowing, all powerful deity). The devotion and spiritual 'faith' required of followers can be absolute and unquestioning thus they may follow a spiritual or cult leader against societies and their own best interests. According to Bainbridge (1979) cult leaders are primarily (and can be exclusively) concerned with their own interests and personal gains and can use entrepreneurial approaches to

achieve this. In Martha's case this would seem to be so with her aspirations for the enablement and emancipation of young people '*forgotten*' by society. This social betterment aspiration is shared across the organisation and follows Bainbridge's (1979, p. 283) psychopathology model of a cult where it provides 'apparent solutions to common intractable human problems'.

The commentary above demonstrates the strong culture within the organisation and that this is intrinsically linked with Martha, her values and leadership approach and that sharing these values is a requirement for employees. As with Arts for All one would anticipate a creative sector organisation such as The Stage welcoming diversity and difference as a valued contribution toward organisational creativity (Amabile, 1996), however it would appear that in both organisations the core values of the leader and the organisational purpose are prioritised to the point of precluding diversity. It would seem that the values of the leader have become normative within the culture of both organisations and that these are the guiding principles in how the organisation should be run. Where staff members stray too far from these it might possibly lead to the facilitation of their exit from the organisation. This of course will lead to a less diverse community which can limit creativity and innovation (Amabile, 1998).

The worker-coop established by Richard also demonstrates a strong alignment of culture with the values and vision of Richard as the RL. This leadership is manifest in demonstrable terms around working hours where Richard indicates he works beyond the hours he is paid for:

*Richard: I work full-time but the business can only afford to pay me 3 or 4 days out of the 5 or 6 I work, but that is OK I can manage that.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

And that this approach is communicated to members and comes with an expectation that they too will have this level of commitment:

*David: And other people have mentioned that it all seems a bit last minute and there are lots of expectations to work overtime without pay and work hard and things can't be afforded. Everyone has bought into the vision of Green Partners and the togetherness and what have you.*

*Interviewer: Is this why you find yourself working beyond contracted hours?*

*David: Yes there is an aspect of that but also a kind of pride thing. If I didn't work the extra hours my job would be more stressful and I would underperform and what have you.*

*I mean Richard works much longer hours than anyone else and that is almost like a trump card if you feel you are working too much. And he refers to it saying things like 'I do that for nothing'. So I think there is a chance that even if Green Partners expanded Richard might take on more stuff even beyond that so there would still be too much to do.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/05/2017

Here Richard sets the expectations of commitment levels around working hours and implies this is a shared approach that the worker-members buy in to, although perhaps reluctantly. This physical rather than financial contribution to the business or 'sweat equity' (McGrattan & Prescott, 2005) does not seem to be measured in anyway, although where members are not paid or are paid less than market rate, they are clearly adding value to the overall organisation. This presents issues for the coop, if members move on they will not be recompensed for all their efforts which have added value to the organisation, which has happened. This situation may be a result of a laissez faire leadership style where no attention is paid to the issue, or perhaps that worker-members are happy to contribute and move on leaving their sweat equity behind in the knowledge that it is supporting a worthy cause.

A significant aspect Richard has brought to the organisational culture is an entrepreneurial dimension, which if we reflect on his comments about his formative years is clearly a part of who he is:

*Richard: I used to truant from school, my degree was not text book process. Always busy doing stuff, promoting, DJ'ing, running parties those sorts of things*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

This entrepreneurial aspect of doing things his way and not being too concerned with traditional approaches is demonstrable in him founding the worker cooperative and setting the organisational vision he has as 'a utopian project'. Within his coop ideal he has looked for like-minded individuals with an entrepreneurial flair to become coop partners:

*Richard: There was a conscious decision to create a business that could accommodate people and their skills, interest and ideas and look to resource the ideas, share the risk, share the rewards and weather that start-up phase.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

This entrepreneurial culture is identifiable in the worker partner's comments:

*Mary: For me as a worker it is just having a real ownership over your work and role and which is such a big part of life and I feel like everyone here has really .... Has a defined position within the coop but they also define it themselves mostly. Like we might walk into the job but then we work out how we want it to go so it is like that kind of autonomy and control for the individuals.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/04/2017

*David: And as a leader Richard is very open to new projects and ideas, as long as there are no financial implications. So he will often say 'great why don't you go off and do it'. So no hand holding but supportive.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/05/2017

This support for innovation within the coop demonstrates Richard's entrepreneurial approach to leadership and that this can lead to innovation within organisations, whilst encouraging worker-members to manage resources (money here) strategically (Renko et al., 2015), including ones with social aims (Newman et al., 2017). However Newman et al (2017) indicate that where an entrepreneurial leadership approach is present it is significantly less likely to lead to followers' organisational commitment than other socially orientated leadership approaches (e.g. servant leadership). In the following comments it is apparent that this expectation of members being

enterprising self-starters has led to a laissez-faire or hands-off style to Richard's entrepreneurial leadership (as suggested above):

*David: Yes. He has a very definite style, not people focused, a little disconnected with the people and... hmm I am not sure how to describe or explain it really.*

*Interviewer: Maybe a little disconnected and focused on the higher-level stuff rather than the day to day?*

*David: Yes. Like you only have a quick induction conversation and the recruitment didn't really have a structure that I could tell. Also, I felt that it is good to give lots of support early on and that didn't really happen it was all a bit last minute.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/05/2017

Here we see Richard's approach to recruitment, induction and day-to-day leadership is minimal with no discernible structure to support it. However, members are not left totally unsupported:

*Mary: So where something that hasn't gone quite right he steps in and helps.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/04/2017

And it is recognised within the organisation that Richard is very much the driving force and visionary leader, but this is often done on his own terms, further exhibiting Richard's entrepreneurial leadership attributes (Renko et al., 2015):

*David: Because Richard is Green Partners in so many ways ... but it then happens that he becomes a blockage as everything is in his head and we have to wait for it to come out as it were.*

Partner Worker Interview dated 26/05/2017

Richard comments on how the culture has evolved in the worker cooperative:

*Richard: How things have evolved, what we do is a product of people that have brought the ideas and skills to the coop. The people that lead on those areas have changed and may at one time have been unpaid but*

*had similar interests. So if you can create the environment that these people can come in and leave again without undermining them as an individual or the organisation that has hosted that activity. So both the box and the microbrewery and the events side of things are still going by the people that set them up but both the brewery and the box were a product of individuals that were passionate but frankly were not interested in a long term career in this kind of role.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

Richard's entrepreneurial approach is likely to have been influenced from his early life where he grew up in a family of entrepreneurs (Scherer, Adams, & Wiebe, 1989) and demonstrated those tendencies himself in his formative years, '*Always busy doing stuff, promoting, DJ'ing, running parties those sorts of things*'. This has led to the recruitment of like-minded individuals with similar enterprising skills (e.g. opportunity spotting, networking, project management) (Wickham, 2006) and the creation of an enterprising culture set by Richard, as is well evidenced in the comments of worker-members (Galloway et al., 2005). The need for them to adopt this approach is also apparent, otherwise they may struggle to meet their commitments with limited management input or guidance.

When we consider the dichotomy presented in the previous section around Richard's self-interested (Kets de Vries, 1985) entrepreneurial leadership approach, it seems it is also present here where he fails to engage members in the coop's forward vision. This holds inherent contradictions with the democratic principles of a cooperative organisation (Co-operatives UK, 2017), thus we can readily understand the challenges members must face, particularly where the focus and forward direction of the organisation resides within Richard '*he becomes a blockage as everything is in his head and we have to wait for it to come out as it were*'. This approach to leadership is not aligned with the cooperative values of democracy nor does it embody the social-relational approach of being a RL where proactive engagement of others (stakeholders) in visioning and decision making should be apparent (Maak & Pless, 2006b). This variance between espoused and demonstrable values presents a dichotomy similar to Lewis's approach to leadership

at Arts for All. Perhaps as with Lewis, the leader's drive for achievement (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) has created a focus on terminal values (Rokeach, 1973) and thus the ends justify the means for Richard too. Certainly Richard's visionary focus and aspirations for innovation across all worker-members is aligned with an entrepreneurial leader's approach (Renko et al., 2015) and is focused on outcomes, but it would seem in practice if he is the only person with the future vision it could be limiting the organisation's innovative potential.

Bridget is keen for all new employees to fully understand the values and reality of the experiential educational development programme (5-day residential course) The Learning Tree offers:

*Bridget: Well, all staff undertake our main course that we provided. This is the Level 3 Forest Schools course. All undertake the training. So, they have a solid understanding of what we offer and also who we are as the training course is built on the company values around the environment and sustainability. So they truly understand the product and the values underpinning it. It also helps their professional development too. So it becomes training for the job and development for the person.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

She indicates clearly that both staff and customers need to share her values attached to this learning experience:

*Bridget: So right from the admin to the apprentice that comes in I want them to understand the messages I want the hearer to hear. So that users (customer) can choose to join our organisation. If what we have to offer doesn't speak to that user then I don't want that person to join in. Staff need to understand this. So they have mentoring, team meetings and every year we have an annual visioning workshop on what has happened before, where we are going, what we would like to happen.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

Bridget talks candidly about customers who approach her organisation but do not hold shared values:

*Bridget: Thus I put barriers in the way of those that are not aligned with the values, however they can still get through, I can't simply stop them, we are in a regulated sector.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

And demonstrates how she supports those with shared values:

*Interviewer: So who would you likely give lots of support to?*

*Bridget: someone who has demonstrated their similar values and buy in into the long term impact of the intervention that is forest schools also their track record and history.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

Staff members also see the difference between Bridget's approach and others in the sector:

*Interviewer: why do you work with The Learning Tree and not elsewhere*

*Martin: There is not anywhere quite like this. There are others out there but they are not doing the same and can be quite political and antagonistic however we are building something quite special.*

Employee Interview dated 03/03/2016

These underlying values of providing a quality product that will enhance people's lives are identifiable in the employee's comments:

*Interviewer: Would you say your values are aligned with the business?*

*Paula: Yes, supporting the children's development is why we are all here.*

Employee Interview dated 08/02/2016

*Mary: I know that the person who owns the organisation is not just interested in money but they are interested in the children and their experience. Often in this sector cash is more important. Bridget is not like this she is focused on quality and the children getting the best experience.*

Employee Interview dated 08/02/2016



*Martin: Well the thing that attracted me to this organisation was that it was more than a business and was more than a transaction business and was there to create something more meaningful.*

Employee Interview dated 03/03/2016

Bridget indicates how closely aligned these values are to her as an individual, directly labelling them as her personal values:

*Bridget: So we have more than a static website and have things like YouTube to ensure they understand the 'Bridget Smith values' before they choose to jump in.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

It appears that Bridget is demonstrating the normative values of justice, recognition and a sense of care that were recognised by Pless (2007) as a key values drivers formed in early life that facilitate responsible leadership. She has positioned her organisation as a high quality distinctive provider within the experiential education sector. She has built this provision around her personal values and these are guiding principles for staff recruitment and induction along with customer selection and service. To not share these values would make a stakeholder less than welcome. This extending of requirement of shared values to customers goes beyond the shared values desires of the other RLs in the project where this was focused around staffing. With Bridget's values being so intertwined with the organisation and it's 'Bridget Smith Values' perhaps she feels that she is potentially supporting someone who is less deserving if their values are not similar, especially so if this provision is a mentoring aspect of her self-reparative therapy (Thomas & Hall, 2008).

For Will's his time at the Quaker boarding school significantly influenced his values and thus how he runs his business and the culture that he creates:

*Will: The way I want to run the business is that I do want everyone to have a say regardless of how important they feel they are. Everyone I feel has something to contribute. So the school has had quite a big effect on how I run the business.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

These egalitarian values are demonstrated in Will's induction of new staff where the business takes on extra costs to ensure both the new staff member is comfortable and confident and that the client still receives the best service:

*Will: when I take on a new member of staff I will make sure they go on joint visits to clients for as long as is necessary even if it means that I am making a loss on those visits.*

*One of the most important things is that I want that new staff member to feel supported. I don't want them to feel they are floundering and not know what they need to do. I also don't want them to look like that in front of clients or other therapists as it doesn't look good for the business. But primarily I want that person to feel supported.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

A recipient staff member comments on this approach:

*Howard: It is a really good way of working. It is very different from many others approach. It is a confidence booster and safety net and a second opinion.*

*He does the same with staff training, he is very responsible in arranging training to ensure we are on the top of our game and he does this frequently which leads to a loss of revenue for the company but makes us better at our job.*

Employee Interview dated 24/07/2016

Will's approach to leadership and staff management is all about supporting the individual and nurturing the team. Staff member Trudy comments on Will's leadership approach:

*Trudy: So for me what keeps me with Will is the team working and support, I think for me it is so valuable that I am prepared to stay out of my comfort zone as it is a great environment, not just Will but the team as well. So I am keen to keep going as the whole team is so supportive. The thing with Will is he is very open and transparent too, so you can have a really open and frank conversation with him.*

Will also comments on his leadership approach:

*Will: I think I am good at what I do because I am good at analysing what needs to be done, I am good at building relationships with the client and their families and that is not always easy. I am good at building relationships with the people who commission the services ...I think it is to do with my previous experience and I am also articulate, I can talk the hind leg off a donkey.*

*A colleague came to me the other day asking for some supervision (clinical guidance) and I responded very quickly. She was requiring reassurance and I felt I was able to give that and acknowledge that there were areas I should have spotted earlier that needed support, and I got in there and offered some support and she went away feeling better*

*For me it is important for me to be communicating with people. It is very important to me to be supporting people who are struggling. Who have the potential to do better - I am also very intuitive, I tend to be able to work out pretty quickly what is going on for somebody. So I think probably one of the things people notice is that I get to the heart of things quite quickly.*

We can see from these comments that Will builds strong supportive relationships with his staff members and clients. He is open about his own abilities and keen to understand the issues people are facing. This is likely to come across as a positive attribute to those around him who, as a result, feel valued and understood, thus building the rapport that is implied. Will indicates these softer skills as being key attributes he looks for when recruiting members of staff:

*Will: when thinking about who to take on in the business I think that as long as someone has got an ability, the easiest bit to teach is the IT side,*

*the hardest bit is how to interact with the client, how to knock on the door and say hi I am the IT person.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

Comments from his staff would indicate that Will's open and supportive approach to leadership is an attractor:

*Howard: He was always so approachable and so as soon as I wanted to move on from my previous role he was the first person I contacted. I have worked for others in this field and Will is approachable, very knowledgeable and is really supportive. He also has excellent systems in place to support the associates in their job and is always mindful in servicing invoices etc he is a very good employer in that sense.*

Employee Interview dated 24/07/2016

Will indicates his strong communication skills as a mechanism he applies when recruiting members of staff. Within this he indicates an informal sifting approach where he is looking for the 'right person':

*Will: But there is a way of matching the right person for the job from just listening to people and understanding their anxieties and their strengths.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

Prioritising client and staff needs above earnings and demonstrating a desire to fully understand people and their issues are key attributes of Will's leadership. He demonstrates he is open about his own abilities and failings where he '*acknowledge that there were areas I should have spotted earlier that needed support*' and is keen to include and value all members of staff thus demonstrating key attributes of authentic leadership (Wang et al., 2014). This has created a team culture of mutually supportive staff members who feel they can approach Will with any issues they might face and that Will's often applied soft skills are the standard approach and culture of the organisation.

Of the two mentored RLs in the project, Peter indicates the influence of his mentor on the organisational culture:

*Peter: So I guess we borrowed a lot of our culture from BAG (mentors organisation) and with that from Phil (mentor) who most people would say he is not a business man because he employs people without being sure of what they are going to do, so he is not that commercially minded. So their employment is why we exist.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Peter goes on to describe the business model of his organisation and how this is focused primarily around the employee's needs:

*Peter: We also have a model of employment that really works for people and helps people get back into work, so they don't need to work 40 hours a week and if they have some key skills around communication within time and if they are not scared of using the phone we can enable them to work and enjoy the work and they stay. Most people we employ didn't have jobs before and we have 20 – 25 people working at any one time*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

The finance director also indicates this organisational culture of prioritising staff needs and comments on Peter's approach within that:

*Chris: I think the whole ethos of Enable is to hire people who otherwise might have difficulty in gaining employment and he has bent over backwards to accommodate people and their issues and challenges. That is part of the ethos of the organisation.*

Finance Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

He goes on to comment on Peter's leadership approach and its effectiveness:

*Chris: He (Peter) is a nice guy and has a cooperative style of management. Which I think makes him very effective, I have been around for some time as I am now 73 and I have seen a lot of managers. But not that many that I consider to be very effective, but Peter is one of them. He listens, he is open to suggestions and he wants to work with people, he is not dictatorial or anything like that.*

Finance Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

He also indicates his interpretation of Peter's view on profit:

*Chris: It has to work financially, of course. I have never had the impression from Peter that we need to increase profit.*

Finance Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

This prioritising of staff over profit is also clear within the pension scheme offered to staff, where this goes beyond statutory requirements at a cost to the organisation:

*Peter: We have a stakeholder pension for which most staff don't qualify as they don't do enough hours. And because of who we are we have offered it to everyone regardless as we feel that is what we should do.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Peter discusses his views on staff management and his relaxed view of their personal issues impacting on their work activity:

*Peter: Of course, we don't get involved in what goes on at home but we encourage the team to talk to each other about problems they have and issues they have, we are aware that some have mental health issues and what have you. There is a balance between leaving everything at the door when you come to work but we have always had the approach that if it helps to get it off your back and it means you are going to be able to work and be more happy at work then there is more value coming in to work I think. So, there is a bit of a blurring of boundaries and we will be as flexible as we can with people about what time they start work and work out shifts with them. But I think mostly their home life does stay at the door. But there have been occasions where this does come into the office and that is OK.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

He also indicates benefits he has noticed as a result of the organisational culture and prioritising of staff needs:

*Peter: You can't say employing a disabled person will make them more loyal but in my experience that is the case. But I think that is not*

*because they are disabled but because of the culture we have built up at Enable. Because we try and be supporting of people's issues and we try and understand the things they are going through and understand the adaptations they need. So, there are huge business benefits which includes massive staff loyalty and we get people not taking sick leave unduly.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Peter's leadership approach prioritises staff needs and re-enforces the values of the organisation: to create employment for disadvantaged people. His leadership style is indicated as cooperative and effective. This is further supported by comments from a supplier to the organisation:

*Frank: So the relationship is balanced and not simply black and white, occasionally he (Peter) might ask us to do something that is outside of the scope of our supply contract and that is fine. So, the relationship becomes much stronger because it is a two way street rather than one getting a service and the other simply receiving money.*

Supplier Interview dated 05/12/2016

This supplier's response and organisational status is no accident as Peter indicates a preference in working with organisations with shared values.

*Peter: We also contract with other social enterprises where we can, our IT is provided by a social enterprise and that is why we contract with them.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

It would also seem that where staff members do not align with the organisational values, they de-select themselves and leave the organisation.

*Peter: However there are staff who have now left that made it clear that they were unhappy as they felt that some staff shouldn't be here or should be paid differently as they were working much slower than other staff but getting paid the same.*

RL Interview dated 29/11/2016

Taking his mentor's organisational culture as a blueprint (Kelman, 1958), Peter's collaborative leadership approach has developed strong relationships with both employees and suppliers. The culture driven forward by Peter has created appropriate employment opportunities and also benefits to the business in partnership working and staff retention and attendance (Kotter, 2008a). We can also see that Peter's mentor's aspirations for the organisation have been maintained and that his selection and mentoring of Peter has been an instrumental aspect of this (Ohlott, 2004). We can also see that shared values are sought in stakeholders and where these are not present in employees they move on.

The second of the two mentored RLs was Wesley. Here, he indicates that although not the strategic leader within his organisation, he does have significant influence over how he runs his department and this is positively encouraged by his mentor the CEO:

*Wesley: We are very much empowered as staff across the organisation including myself as one of the senior managers I am encouraged to take my own lead.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Wesley's departmental activity is establishing collaborative health care provision in disadvantaged communities. He is seen as the leader by those he collaborates with as detailed by one of his partner organisations:

*Hue: So to be honest we are working with Wesley and not with Better Communities. The funding is there and we are working with Wesley. Better Communities is in the community but not of the community.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

In this comment, we can see Wesley's approach to partner working has had an impact on how he is viewed and that this positive interpretation has facilitated a good working relationship despite the less than positive view of Wesley's employer. Here we see Wesley's value of collaborative working as a requirement to work with him and his team:

*Wesley: So, our values are collaboration and that is a big thing everyone works together and if you have a member of staff that doesn't want to*



*work with people they are very quickly.... They leave quite quickly. They are not pushed out but they realise quite quickly that this is not for them. And this is challenging as we grown and have remote workers at other organisations, but it is still key and that sense of team working and looking out for each other is very strong and we empower our senior workers to keep that moving forward. And I think within our partner organisations that sense of collaboration is good but when there is not much money around we are asked to collaborate but there is not money behind it but because we have built this up over many years we can still do it.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

We can also interpret from this that Wesley sees the relationships borne of this collaborative approach as growing social capital to support project delivery where other resources (money) are in short supply.

The empowerment of staff across the whole organisation is an approach adopted by Wesley within his area of activity as long as the wider collective values are present:

*Wesley: In terms of the organisation we have a hierarchy but when we do our org chart we don't have a sense of 'I'm your manager I will tell you what to do', yes we have a strong business plan but it is very much a collective approach.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Wesley demonstrates his value of staff and how important they are in achieving success for the organisation:

*Wesley: Staff are your biggest asset, and if you look after your staff and they buy into your organisational values, your business model is sound as a result.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Wesley elaborates on value alignment of staff and the organisation:

*Interviewer: How do you know their values are aligned with what you want to achieve?*

*Wesley: Well it starts off with recruitment. Absolutely it is about.... Well it is not so much about qualifications and experience, although there are competencies, but it is about when they walk in that door how do they fit with the organisations and what is your gut feeling?*

*So, I think recruitment is the key element that is where you get your gems and then a very robust induction within a three-month probationary period we have a month's induction. So, for the first two weeks new recruits are not doing work, which freaks some people out, we give them two weeks to have free rein to go out and talk to people on the projects. We give them pointers on who to talk to and who to shadow and which organisations to visit and find out what is happening and what Better Communities will expect from you.*

*So recruitment, induction and then it is about... well the way we are with people, people are generally quite nice and cooperative and then you can build up that peer support and that has been the core to who Better Communities is and how we instil those values consistently across the organisation.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Here we see that organisational 'fit' is a requirement at recruitment and that judgement on this is done informally. Following this, induction plays a significant role in culturally aligning new staff with the organisational values of collaborative working. We can also see that this focus on working collaboratively within the organisation (peer support) is later extended to external partners:

*Wesley: So that they, the staff, are not just workers but they are an advocate of Better Communities. So, I have done lots of work on relationship building and instilling in them that they are the face of Better Communities. So internally that is where we are at and some staff have got on with it and some didn't like it, they have left.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

Once again it is very apparent that where staff do not align with the organisational values they move on.

It would appear that this focus on collaborative working with partner organisations has been well received. Here Wesley comments on a successful partnership event:

*Wesley: We had a big partnership event of all our partners of which 30 out of 48 attended and we did lots of work there around partnership delivery which included discussions around boundaries and we had some feedback which was all positive. That was that we share the same values as Better Communities, we know where we want to go and we want to work together, so that collaborative approach really came across.*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

It is very apparent here that the collaborative approach has led to good levels of engagement and that this is deep enough to recognise shared values across the organisations. This is further supported by commentary from one of the partner organisations, where Wesley's leadership approach around collaboration is a key element of this success:

*Hue: We were always looking for a genuine partnership and I have expressed this to Wesley: as there is a fear that the health network could get taken over by a large org such as Better Communities and I was very clear that we didn't want that to happen. However fortunately I can work with Wesley although he is Better Communities and anything I say to you I would be happy him hearing. So, for me it had to be a win-win arrangement and my concern is ultimately for the beneficiaries and so far what I have seen so far is working. Largely because Wesley being the person he is I can work with him.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

It is clear from the commentary that collaborative working is a core value for Wesley and his leadership approach and that staff members need to share this value at the

outset. Where staff do not hold this value, they leave the organisation. Those that remain have this value re-enforced by a process of induction and day to day management and this has become the organisation culture. This collaborative approach has led to successful outcomes for the organisation and its partners.

It is evident within the data that the RL's values underpin their approach to leadership and that this has become the dominant value set within their organisation. With this value set driving RL activity, this has informed and established the organisational culture. Staff are recruited, trained, retained and potentially rewarded where they are aligned with this value set thus ensuring their alignment with the culture. The espoused values are the same as or are intrinsically linked with the social betterment values of the respective organisation as explored in the first section of this chapter.

The established culture within each of the sampled organisations is to pursue outcomes supporting the organisation purpose which is aligned with the stated social betterment values of the RL. These outcomes are prioritised above all other aspects of the organisation including monetary gain or profit and are the cornerstone of what the organisation is and who the RL is. However, there are other behaviours at play within some of the organisations, where RL behaviours or expressed values contradict the RL espoused values. This was particularly so around recruitment and retention of staff where individuals who do not align with the RL/organisation values are encouraged to move on quickly or are not recruited, thus demonstrating a value preference that is not aligned with aspects of social betterment and equality. Employees (or applicant employees) who do not demonstrate or indicate an agreement with the current culture (which in the mind of the leader is the 'right' culture with higher purpose values) may be seen to prioritise a different lesser value set and thus by default are 'wrong' as they are not aligned with the organisation's cultural norm (Ridley-Duff, 2010). This approach of collectively using a set of normative values as a mechanism for recruitment and control mirrors the 'concertive control' (Barker, 1999) seen in leaderless teams. This emergent system of control exhibits elements of limiting individual's self-direction and empowerment and can constrain them to the boundaries of the organisation's developed shared values (Jackson & Parry, 2011). This normative approach will limit

diversity within employees, which in turn will limit innovation. Integrative and responsible leaders who create a culture of inclusion are able to capture and capitalise on diversity and the resulting innovative capacity (Pless & Maak, 2004). Within the RLs studied here, this potential is being missed as a result of the RL's value preference. Conversely this approach does ensure cultural alignment that can lead to improved organisational performance (Kotter, 2008a) and thus may be justifiable to the RLs in question. The potential for improved organisational performance is recognised by Maak (2007) in the RL literature where he indicates RLs as leaders of business improvements and that this is done through the social capital that is developed and sustained as a result of the shared values and interests of the stakeholders. Waldman and Galvin (2008) see one of the challenges of being a RL is to balance the needs of multiple stakeholders and that exclusion of some stakeholders is likely to occur as trade-offs amongst mutually exclusive needs are made.

Clearly there are pros and cons for RLs building an organisation of like-minded individuals (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). With the RLs studied there is a preference for shared values across the organisation thus indicating they see more value in this than a diverse organisation. It would appear that they feel the benefits of like-mindedness outweigh the costs, this could be because they are unaware of the pros and cons of the situation or they believe this approach will bring results. As goal achievement is ranked highly amongst leaders (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) this becomes the ends justifying the means, aligned with an ethical philosophy of act utilitarianism where the primary focus is the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people (Arnold, Beauchamp, & Bowie, 2012). Where many of the RLs have demonstrated a strong focus on the outcomes of social betterment above many other factors (e.g. monetary gain) this could also be influencing their approach here. Where they see like-mindedness as a mechanism for organisational effectiveness, they are having a greater impact on the communities they are hoping to improve. Waldman and Galvin (2008) recognise that to be a responsible leader one must also be an effective leader. For the RLs in this study they may well share this view and see the trade off as acceptable and necessary in optimising outcomes for the organisation.

It is also apparent that the RLs are very much the leaders of their respective organisations and even where it is implied that this may not be so (e.g. Richard as a coop member and Lewis wanting equal agency for all staff) it is evident in the data that they are. However, from the comments of the relevant stakeholders it would appear that this is acceptable as there is no discernible dissent.

Of further interest within the data was the strong congruence of many employees and stakeholders with the RL, their values and the organisational culture, sometime to a remarkable degree e.g. *'Not that I want it to sound like a cult or anything but it does become that'*. Choice of employer is linked with social influence and context and is a function of social commitment and comparison (Higgins, 2001) thus we can infer that applicant employees applied to their respective organisations as they had a level of shared interests and potentially shared values prior to joining the organisation. It is also apparent that the level of influence of some of the RLs is so significant it has influenced the self-identity of some employees (Collinson, 2006). Thus it is likely that new recruits are like-minded at the outset and go on to have their values fine-tuned to further align with the relevant RL, as is asserted by Haslam and Platlow (2001) and indicated in the data e.g. *'So now they are my values'*. This would demonstrate that employees often internalise the values of the RL and organisation as they see these as rewarding and congruent with their own values e.g. *'I think if my personal values weren't aligned then I wouldn't be able to do my job'*. This will ensure the sustainability of the established culture as there is both public and personal acceptance of these values within employees (Kelman, 1958; Maak, 2007) and this is not merely conformity where only a public acceptance is in evidence and thus is easily diminished.

### **5.1.3 Responsible Leader's Application of Human and Social Capital**

It became apparent during the analysis of the data that a theme amongst some of the RLs sampled was that their fundamental offer as an organisation was a service that was developed directly from their existing knowledge and capabilities or they capacity-built themselves as an individual in order to then develop a specialist service provision around their capacity. This approach was common amongst the five entrepreneurial RLs within the study. This specialism or expertise ranged from

an individual's personal interests and experience (e.g. the arts) to a highly specialised professional practitioner (e.g. social worker/brain injury rehabilitation case manager) and was the RLs human capital (Becker, 1994). Beyond this it was also apparent that the entrepreneurial RLs had also utilised and grown their network of contacts in order to facilitate the growth and success of their organisations. This is a common practice amongst entrepreneurs (Singh, Hybels, & Hills, 2000).

This human capital utilised primarily by the five entrepreneurial RLs was the core of the offer of their organisation. Entrepreneurs often look to their own knowledge and abilities in starting a new venture (Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011). This offer was the mechanism by which they had created their organisation and were applying in order to achieve the organisation's social betterment aims. Coupled with this was their use of the social capital in the form of the personal and professional networks they held, where they tapped into these to identify opportunities and take the organisation forward (Maak, 2007).

For Martha and Lewis both had a love of the arts and used their human and social capital in this area to build their organisation and to further its aims. For Lewis he is seeking to influence society for the better via a medium that he feels has influenced him for the better. He comments here on why he established the organisation he did and how he has since taken this forward:

*Lewis: So we were thinking about how our view of the world had been affected by our experience of what we might loosely call creative information, what might be an art form, a philosophically written article an article in a paper and how those component experiences has enabled us to have a good viewpoint on the world. So, we thought is it worth while trying to add to that? And we thought yes... and we decided I had good contacts in Sheffield so we started up here and began with putting on events.*

...

*I enjoy the delivery as well but for me the main thing is coming up with ideas that have some kind of good or social impact. Over the years we have become more interested in a more systemic impact. So rather than*

*(pause) say we are going to oppose fracking in Sheffield, which would be a symptom of a wider issue, and the argument follows that you follow things down to their root and what you find at the end is an individual and if you can affect individuals and an individual's experience you can arguably you are making that sort of systemic attack or change on people's perception of the world and their perception of right and wrong and that has become really important for us.*

*Fundamentally I try to facilitate more creative information out there because I think as soon as you think critically and think reflectively it brings you joy of some kind. Let's face it, quality of life is fundamental and the reason why we don't have a ministry for quality of life is beyond me.*

RL Interview dated 16/05/2017

It is clear that Lewis has a deep affinity for the spoken and written word and how that can convey meaning and stimulate critical and reflective thought. For him this has been a source of much inspiration and happiness and with the creation of his organisation he is seeking to share this inspiration and happiness with the wider community, all with a focus on a '*good or social impact*'. His earlier life experiences had led him to want to '*make the world a better place*' and for him the exposure to the arts had facilitated that, therefore his logical conclusion seems to be that this worked for him thus it could work for others too. To this end he has applied his knowledge and passion for the subject along with his networks '*I had good contacts in Sheffield so we started up here*', and entrepreneurial approach in furthering the organisational aims of social betterment. Reflecting on earlier analysis around Lewis's values from Rokeach's (1973) work on terminal and instrumental values, it could be that the terminal values are '*make the world a better place*' with the instrumental values (the means to achieving this) being the arts.

The medium of intervention for Martha's organisation was the performing arts. She studied her degree in this subject and saw the potential:

*Martha: I had spent 3 years doing a drama degree and realised there were lots of ways you could use performing arts for community benefit.*



*So, for me within performing arts everything I do I ask what is the social and political connection here?*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Martha's reflections have led her to the realisation that the performing arts can be used as a mechanism for social benefit. As a performer and theatre director Martha maintains her performing arts network and position undertaking consultancy work, thus continuing to build and use her social capital:

*Martha: This is partly as it helps to build the business up as well as you start to be recognised as still being a professional in the theatre world so the kids that see me doing that and want to go into the professional theatre world see that and it is important that we keep those contacts.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

She utilises and grows her social capital through her networking skills and has built up a stakeholder network around her organisation:

*Martha: For me literally everyone is a potential stakeholder as they could be on the board, have kids, be a kid, work at an educational institution so because of the work we do and we are so broad, which is intentional everyone is a potential stakeholder. So even big business events I see everyone as a potential stakeholder. And of course the charity in Brazil and their stakeholders. Also, the police - especially the sexual exploitation team as we have a lot of cases of young girls that have been sexually exploited - so we get referrals here as we are quite good at working with these individuals and are known for that. Other referrals are kids that have mental health issues such as eating disorders, self-harming, so we get referrals from social workers, community support teams, mental health teams - pretty much anyone who could be working with your people and we often advocate for our young people at multi agency meetings and what have you.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

Martha has also continued to develop her human capital in undertaking further study that supports her organisation and its aims:

*Martha: and then a few years ago I did a Masters degree and that was in Social Enterprise and Cooperative Management and that was in many ways it was a confirmation that I was doing many things right so it reaffirmed a lot of what I was doing.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

She also cites her leadership skills as an asset to herself and the organisation:

*Martha: It is being a leader in the community its being a leader with everyone I engage with be it in the shop or on a night out. It is a bigger thing, I think if you are privileged enough to have leadership skills then you have to be responsible for that and you have to steward them.*

RL Interview dated 26/04/2017

As a professional in the field, Martha has identified the potential of the performing arts to positively influence change in individuals and communities and has applied her knowledge, skills, experience and networks to create a novel educational intervention. This intervention is Martha's entrepreneurial creation (Wickham, 2006) and she and her team are applying it to achieve the social aims of the organisation.

Bridget has also created a specific educational intervention, one that is aimed at the social development of young people through the medium of outdoor experiential learning. This was born of Bridget's realisation of this medium's potential during the caving experience presented in the previous chapter. Driven by this experience she has developed her knowledge, skills and abilities in order to be able to professionally utilise this medium as a personal developmental intervention. She was inspired to study outdoor education, where she became a caving and climbing instructor and then she went onto achieve a 1<sup>st</sup> class degree in Countryside Management and followed this with a PGCE. This demonstrates her entrepreneurial cognitive ability in being able to both identify and take to market this service provision (Corbett, 2007), a cognitive skill set found in all of the entrepreneurial RLs.

During her university course she focused the research element to align with

her aspirations and interests.

*Bridget: Then, when I went to Uni, I did my dissertation which was on the impact of the outdoors on the communication skills of children with autism. And basically what I found was that in a classroom environment children would 99% of the time respond to a significant adult asking them a question. Whereas, when we were climbing, there was a 48% increase in the level of self-initiated communication between the group, their peers, significant adults, everyone. And it was massive, it was all excitement, joy, and it confirmed what I had seen in that cave before.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

She has also capitalised on her passion and belief in the outcomes her intervention can achieve. She communicates this via a range of mediums:

*Bridget: I have written a book now about The Learning Tree model so that people can understand our foundations.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

One of her managers comments on her passionate presenting skills:

*Martin: Bridget is incredibly good at speaking from her heart and does so in a compelling and passionate way and comes across really well as a story teller so to speak. So, we use Bridget's strengths in talking and getting her on the right stage e.g. TEDx. She has developed a real skill in this area.*

Manager Interview dated 03/03/2015

Bridget has also developed and utilised her social capital in building an extensive network of like-minded individuals and organisations that are focused on the same goals as her organisation:

*Bridget: So, stakeholder groups, starting up from the ground it is that natural environment. Those green spaces however big or small are important, not just as an end product but also as they can influence the families where their children have been to our nursery, because they*

*(parents) want a strong foundation. I am also interested in what influence that has on decision makers and politicians*

*Interviewer: Oh, so seeing what you are doing and the benefits?*

*Bridget: Yes, because it is proof and everyone likes proof. So there is that wider context and as the movement grows that can have an impact on policy makers such as the Green party who want every child to do forest schools.*

*Other stakeholders would be people who have their own innate desire to change the world even in a small way, which is why we have 19 associates. So that the end product, which tends to be working with children in a developmental way, I didn't want it to stop there. I wanted to care about adults who wanted to set up their own training companies, so they were employable with a really positive structure to their provision*

*Interviewer: So these associates are like franchises?*

*Bridget: Yes, they come and train with us and our model and then they go and work in schools as their own businesses. So their stakeholders then can be spread geographically and I want that to continue*

*Interviewer: So it is like a pyramid structure where you influence them and they go on to do the same to a wider audience*

*Bridget: Yes and it is not just geographical spread but could be different interest groups, such as they may be invited to go and talk to a group in Belgium or something.*

*Other stakeholders are people we hire venues from - green spaces or buildings, such as scouts, guides, forestry commission and so on.*

RL Interview dated 02/12/2015

Here we get an insight into the depth of Bridget's wider network and how she is using it to achieve the aims of her organisation. The comments prior to this demonstrate her focused commitment in developing herself in order to start up and build the organisation she has. Driven by a strong belief and passion in what she does she uses this as a base for communicating her message to potential beneficiaries and like-minded others.

All of the RLs involved in the project have demonstrated entrepreneurial tendencies to varying degrees, of these Richard stood out to the researcher as having a very strong entrepreneurial flair and that this was combined with a self-assured value set around anti-capitalism and social business models. It was no surprise to the researcher that Richard defined himself on professional networking websites as a 'Cultural Entrepreneur', although his aspirations and activities do not align with the academic definition of this term which is around furthering the arts via entrepreneurial approaches (Klamer, 2011) . Perhaps more fitting would be the title of 'social entrepreneur' where the individuals focus is on innovative approaches to fair trade, human rights, equality etc. (Mair & Noboa, 2006).

Richard's background also includes a degree in Urban Studies and Planning and an MA in Creative and Media Enterprise. He has also worked as a University Lecturer teaching Cultural Policy Studies and Event Management. He talks about conceiving of his existing organisation whilst studying his MA.

*Richard: So I thought of Green Partners as an idea when I was doing an MA at the University of Warwick. It was an artistic business management programme*

*So at Warwick I wrote an essay about on-line business models and how it would be good to have communities of people and a platform in which they could interact and share video and photos. That led eventually to setting up in business as Green Partners and starting off as an events organiser, to start with it was me as a sole trader and was an events business and then I set up as a company limited by shares I still had lots of voluntary and community organisations as clients and feedback from them was that this is great but surely you could be non-profit or more*

*aligned with what we do and I was interested in that but didn't quite know what to do. Then rewind to some coops that I had interactions with at Warwick but they were too fringe or peripheral, then fast forward to something called 'making local food work' a national programme teaching people about different forms of community and social enterprise around food. A really key part of that was about coops. I got involved in setting up a community supporting an agriculture coop that in the end wasn't for me, but gave me that experience and confidence to then decide to turn Green Partners from a company into a coop with two other people who were interested.*

*How things have evolved, what we do is a product of the people that have brought their ideas and skills to the coop. The people that lead on those areas have changed and may at one time have been unpaid but had similar interests. So, if you can create the environment that these people can come in and leave again without undermining them as an individual or the organisation that has hosted that activity.*

*We do have a 3<sup>rd</sup> amorphous project, you know a greenhouse where lots of stuff comes and goes – like an incubator for new ideas and projects.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

We can see here that Richard is actively encouraging enterprise in others who have become involved with him and the coop and share those values (as mentioned in the previous chapter). We can see in his story that he has not always had a defined focus on where the organisation would go or what it would become, but has taken it in various directions as opportunities presented themselves, further demonstrating his entrepreneurial approach (Corbett, 2007). This uncertainty of specific direction or business offering was accompanied by his aspiration to improve the world, thus implying a destination for his endeavour but an uncertain route to achieving this. This replicates Sarasvathy's (2009) theory of entrepreneurial 'effectuation' where entrepreneurs when faced with uncertainty will be self-reliant enough to make

things up as they go along as a pose to 'causation' where planning and preparation are the exhibited behaviours.

Richard goes onto explain how his experiences have built up his knowledge base and capabilities:

*Richard: So our experience on community economic development is quite unique, our ability to identify urban agriculture as a direction we should be moving in is a product of identifying a mismatch between city region , city and local developments in policy and framework that that all exists in, and one thing to identify something that could join up those different levels of what's going on but also address some of the disadvantaged communities and that this is holistic and not just focusing on one aspect such as environment or one community framework.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

As a political person it is also evident that Richard has built up an extensive network in his life, some of which is professionally political and outside the activities of his organisation, demonstrating his aptitude in utilising his social capital:

*Richard: You know I have been a member of Greenpeace and also stood as a parliamentary candidate and also for local council.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

And some of which is to support his ideals and the future of the worker-coop he has created:

*Richard: Within all this I have been taking a strategic role within the Sheffield Food Partnership which will support all of this and is part of the Sustainable Food Cities initiative they advocate a particular approach that we will adopt here in Sheffield.*

*So I have identified some more strategic work like supporting local community initiatives, getting involved with the universities, the local authority and informing through dialogue and narrative on certain issues relating to economics, the role of small organisations in developing a resilient local economy and getting involved in research*

*agendas around urban agriculture. All of which is strategically aligned with what we do on a day to day basis.*

RL Interview dated 02/04/2017

The comments above would align with Richard's self-identity of Cultural Entrepreneur (albeit his own interpretation) and that he has applied his education, experiences and entrepreneurial flair in creating a well networked 'movement' that he sees as being meaningful and of social benefit. His extensive network and entrepreneurial approach enables him to spot opportunities (Corbett, 2007) and like-minded individuals that will take the coop towards its aims.

During the interview with Will, it became clear to the interviewer that he held strong skills in communication and that much of this was a professional approach where he applied techniques such as Active Listening (Rogers & Farson, 1979), an approach that is firmly grounded in the attitude of the user, to enable him to understand the other person's perspective better. When reflecting on this during the analysis it became apparent that this was a key skill set developed by Will during his formative years and professional career as a Social Worker, Counsellor and also a Brain Injury Rehabilitation Case Manager.

This focus on other's interests and needs could be his adoption of the Quaker philosophy of '*seeing what is good in someone and focusing in on that*'. Here we get an insight into his human capital development when he talks about why he is working with people with a brain injury and how this is linked to his past experiences:

*Will: I think it goes back to me being a social worker. I have always worked in an organisation that supports people who need it. It is very hard to answer without saying I want to help people - it is an answer. Interestingly I answered this same question on the social worker course where I qualified and lots of my peers were linked to religion, formally or informally and I went to a Quaker school, although I am not a practicing Quaker. This has a very strong ethic of helping and supporting people. And there if you didn't want to do sport you could do community service instead, which I did.*



*When I went to Uni I joined the counselling service, my gran had been a Samaritan, one of the original ones. So, there is that in the family and she was married to a vicar who was a very pastoral bloke, so there you go.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

We can see here that Will's knowledge, skills and philosophy have been developed from an early age. Prior to his career as a Social Worker he was also employed as a Counsellor, he comments here on some specific skill sets and techniques he has taken from this that have gone on to directly influence his leadership approach:

*Will: The other thing is something I have done in the past, this is called co-counselling. The theory of this is that if you listen and don't interrupt other than encouraging them to speak they will come out with more and more and emotions and feelings will come out and if you get these out you will unlock patterns of behaviour in yourself and set yourself free in a way. I don't do it anymore but I do feel it works and it helped me talk about things and this does help you get it out. One of the things about this is that it looks at leadership and it encourages people who wouldn't otherwise see themselves as leaders to become leaders with support from others. So a working class person or someone from a minority community is encouraged to be a leader but the way you lead is about finding your own internal power and not power given by my birth right and people who don't feel they could be leaders are reminded that they are leading their life and this is real. So people do have the ability in whatever way works for them and what that means for me and the business is ..... what that teaches you is not to be oppressive as a leader, you lead by valuing what others do and by bringing people out and encouraging them to challenge themselves.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

Further commenting on his leadership approach Will indicates additional skills, experience and knowledge around brain injury rehabilitation and IT:

*Will: I have been around the brain injury rehab world. I think I am good at what I do because I am good at analysing what needs to be done, I am good at building relationships with the client and their families and that is not always easy. I am good at building relationships with the people who commission the services and I think what I see as important, almost crucial is that in my previous role as a case manager - where I was responsible for managing the whole rehab pathway for a client - I get every aspect of how things are for someone who has had a brain injury and how they are best supported through that. So I know where we fit in and where we don't fit in and I know how to behave in an MDT (multi-disciplinary team) and what an MDT should do. I think it is to do with my previous experience and I am also articulate, I can talk the hind legs off a donkey. I can talk about what I do and also it is quite interesting because the last thing I come to is the fact that I know about computers and technology.*

RL Interview dated 24/06/2016

It is clear that the combination of these softer skills, his brain injury rehabilitation knowledge, experience as a social worker, networks and IT capabilities have created an opportunity that Will has recognised (Corbett, 2007) and acted upon in setting up his business. Within this, he has applied his soft skills in building up a network and creating strong relationship (Granovetter, 2003) with clients and other professionals in the brain injury rehabilitation world. This skill set, experience, knowledge and network has underpinned his leadership approach and facilitated brain injury victims access to what was for them a challenging area, namely the use of IT equipment and technology that would improve their lives.

#### **5.1.4 Mentored RLs Application of Human and Social Capital**

The two mentored RLs in the project also presented human and social capital as mechanisms to drive their business activities forward. However, what was noticeable was that this was around leadership style and approach and did not include specific technical skills, personal interests or knowledge as was indicated by

the five entrepreneurial RLs.

Peter had been recruited into his role as MD twelve years prior to the research interview and had during that time built the organisation in-line with its original purpose. His previous career as a sports journalist and his education as a history graduate it would seem had few if any direct links with his role as MD. Equally he knew little about and had no networks within the social enterprise sector. However we can see that his leadership approach is influential on the success of the organisation, here his Financial Director comments on this.

*Chris: he is a nice guy and has a cooperative style of management. Which I think makes him very effective, I have been around for some time as I am now 73 and I have seen a lot of managers. But not that many that I consider to be very effective, but Peter: is one of them.*

*One of the things I really like about him is that he does listen to the things that I say and he will act on it. He is the boss but he will take on my and others opinions in meetings. I really don't think he would be comfortable being dictatorial and telling people what to do I think he likes to receive different people's ideas and perspectives and work things out with them. He wouldn't ask me to do things that I wasn't comfortable with*

Financial Director Interview dated 11/12/2016

This view of an approachable leadership style is shared by one of Peter's suppliers:

*Frank: His attitude is much the same as mine and is always calm, relaxed and approachable.*

Supplier Interview dated 05/12/2016

Wesley was also in his twelfth year at the time of the interview and he had grown and developed with the organisation, originally recruited in a junior role.

*Wesley: I have been challenged in my leadership style I have worked my way up from a junior post*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

As the strategic lead for several partnership projects we get an insight into Wesley's leadership approach from one of the partner leads commenting on Wesley's approach:

*Hue: I would like to say sensitive to the end user and our aims. But he is bound within the structure of his organisation. He is sympathetic and supporting of our aims but does have to sometimes put a brake on in his position as our needs may not always be able to be met within the project and Wesley will have to communicate that to us. He has to walk a tightrope between both parties and be honest and not make rash promises and be truthful and I think from the outset he has done that.*

Partner Lead Interview dated 28/09/2017

This sensitive and pragmatic approach aligns with Wesley's self-image of his leadership style, which he comments on here:

*Wesley: It all comes down to who I am as a person. I like to work with people at a single level it is very much I want to treat people how I would be treated myself and it is about that partnership approach as you work together and that's the best way to achieve your objective*

*I am now developing senior managers I have had to marry the fact that I am a nice person and I do want to work with you but sometimes I will make a decision and you have to do it. That has been a gradual process with some of the staff I have been managing for about 5 or 6 years, putting those boundaries in place and it has been a softly-softly approach, I haven't sat down and said this is what I do and this is what you do. It is fine tuning,*

RL Interview dated 15/06/2017

We can see that both of the mentored RLs have strong leadership skills around communication and engagement. However, the nature of the role which they have been recruited to has no specific technical expertise or specialist requirements beyond this. In addition to this, it would seem that the social capital they have in the

form of networks has been built from within their current role and was not something they brought to the role.

Amongst the five entrepreneurial RLs it is apparent that the application of their human capital (Becker, 1994) and their social capital (Maak, 2007) is at the core of the offer of their organisation. Some have managed to push their development and grow their expertise and networks enough to position themselves as global experts in their given field (e.g. Bridget). With a desire to improve the lives of other and as entrepreneurs, it would appear that they have spotted the opportunity in the market place and the potential in themselves and their networks as a resource (Corbett, 2007) that they have then utilised to achieve their social betterment goals. This is exemplified by Bridget where she knew in her formative years that she wanted to improve the world and then in early adult life she identified the mechanism (caving experience) that would facilitate this. She went on to educate and train herself to provide this type of experience and on this journey built up an extensive network of individuals and organisations with shared interests, which in turn has enabled her to provide the services she does, thus moving her closer to her aspirations.

Comparing and contrasting this human and social capital application for social betterment with Rokeach's (1973) theory of instrumental and terminal values, as discussed in the previous section around Lewis and Richard's approach to cultural leadership. It is apparent that once again there is an instrumental value (the application of human and social capital) that is facilitating the achievement of the terminal value (social betterment).

#### **5.1.5 Chapter Conclusions**

The empirical evidence in this chapter demonstrates that RL values (discussed in the previous chapter) are a fundamental aspect of both who the RLs are and how they lead their organisations. The data presented reveals that the individual personal values that are held by each of the RLs are the same values that have informed their organisation's purpose and underpinned their leadership approach or style. It is these values that underpin the research dimensions of 'how' the RLs practice responsible leadership and further defines to 'who' they feel they are responsible.

For the five entrepreneurial RLs these values are born of their experiences and internalised values developed in their formative years. For the mentored RLs, their organisation values and purpose were already closely aligned with their own value set and they have then gone on to fully adopt these values (Kelman, 1958) as their own. As a result, they are continuing the original purpose of the organisation, at some level becoming a proxy for their mentor who was instrumental in defining the organisation's original purpose.

The individual RL values that inform the organisational purpose go on to pervade the organisational culture of each of the organisations studied. This cultural embedding of these values is a key function of each of the RLs and is identifiable in their governance, decision making and leadership approach (Schein, 2010). This culture directly supports the values and purpose of the organisation, so much so that it prioritises this above all other aspects including monetary gain or profit and is readily identifiable across the organisations. It is these cultural values (derived from the RL) that inform the recruitment, training, retention and rewarding of employees. Where there is found to be a poor alignment between the culture and an employee (or applicant employee) they are actively encouraged to move on or '*they leave quite quickly*' from the organisation. This value preference in favouring like-minded individuals highlights a dichotomy between the social betterment values espoused by the RLs and their demonstrable management practices. It also contradicts RL theory where RLs are said to create inclusive cultures (Pless & Maak, 2004). This lack of tolerance for those with different values was a common theme across the RLs. Although there was insufficient evidence to determine how strictly this was applied across the sample, all of the RLs demonstrated it to a degree. It could be that the espoused values had become normative, especially as many people's view is that leaders should have a strong moral compass (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Thus, the values of social betterment are seen as the correct ones and to have values at odds with these is by default to hold incorrect values. The result of this normative approach will prevent diversity within the organisations concerned, which in turn can have positive and negative consequences. Well aligned homogenous teams and cultures can produce efficiencies and high performance (Kotter, 2008a), but they can also stifle innovation and creativity (Amabile, 1998). Heterogeneous teams are seen

to generate new ways of thinking and thus progress and potentially lead in their sector as they are a learning organisation (Senge, 2006). However, where organisations fail to learn they will ultimately fail as other competing, learning organisations will evolve to better meet society's needs (Senge, 2006). Where the RLs values have become norms for the organisation this could become entrenched dogma born of these shared and fixed values. The result of this will, at some level, prevent learning within the organisation that could lead to limited success, or even the organisations demise (Miska et al., 2014).

There was further evidence of dichotomy in two of the RLs (Lewis and Richard) where their espoused values of their organisations were egalitarian with a shared leadership approach. One RL establishing a member co-op the other RL indicating all staff having '*equal agency*', but in practice the RLs were very much the primary leader and applied their power in running their organisation. These dichotomies are explored in more depth in the following chapter.

Of the five entrepreneurial RLs in the study it was clear that they had applied their human capital (Becker, 1994) and social capital (Maak, 2007) as resources to achieve their organisations' social betterment aims. The human capital was a specialism or expertise that was based around their education, skills, experience or interests. The RLs have also built up an extensive network of individuals, organisations and other stakeholders with shared interests. This social capital has underpinned their establishing and growing their organisations, exemplified by Lewis who looked to his social capital when deciding where to base his organisation, '*we decided I had good contacts in Sheffield so we started up here*'. Each of these five RLs had applied their entrepreneurial skills in identifying the potential of this aspect (human and social capital) of who they were (Corbett, 2007) as a means to achieve their social betterment aspirations. The identified skill or expertise was the core of their organisational offer from the outset and has remained so, although as entrepreneurs all five have gone on to grow and develop their organisations. Aligned with Rokeach's theory on personal values (1973) this human and social capital was very much the means applied (instrumental value) to achieve their social betterment aspirations (terminal value).

The table below (5.1) presents this chapter's findings across the RLs studied

and cross references the key themes identified with the RL these can be attributed to. As with the previous chapter these themes are not uniformly distributed and a nil indicator does not necessarily show this theme to be absent for the RL indicated, only that evidence was not present in the data.



Participant	Will	Richard	Bridget	Lewis	Martha	Wesley	Peter
Theme	Entrepreneurial Responsible Leaders					Mentored RLs	
Uses own values to inform purpose of org	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Org primary purpose is social betterment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uses own values to inform leadership decision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Requires shared values in staff and stakeholders (intolerant of those not aligned)	P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P
Leadership activity contradicts espoused values		✓		✓			
Culturally embed their values across the org	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Utilise their human and social capital as the means to achieve social betterment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Adopt the values of their mentor						✓	✓
P = Partial (some but limited evidence)							

**Table 5-1 Overview of Chapter 5 Findings**

What does become more pronounced when reviewing the table is the significant variance in practice between the mentored and entrepreneurial RLs. The mentees are very much the product of their mentors where they share similar values and have been recognised as such and as holding leadership skills or potential (Ohlott, 2004). They have fine-tuned their values to wholly align with their mentors and the organisation their mentor has brought into being, they have then gone on to carry the mission of the organisation forward inspired by their mentors original vision and thus sustaining it (Kelman, 1958).

These findings detail the practice of responsible leadership within the seven RLs studied. The RLs use their values to determine the purpose of their organisation within which there is a defined beneficiary group. This group is sometimes very focused and identifiable (e.g. The Stage beneficiaries being children excluded or at risk of being excluded from education) and sometimes very disparate (e.g. Arts for All who seek to influence readers of arts based free literature). However, the focus is always on social betterment (macro focus) and/or improving people's lives (micro focus). Therefore, the RL dimension of 'who' RLs feel they are responsible too must be a combination of those people they perceive as needing help and also where they believe they have capacity (human and social capital) to help in improving those people's lives.

The RL personal values coupled with their human and social capital detail the 'how' dimension of responsible leadership. As indicated above the RL personal values inform (entrepreneurial RLs) or are closely aligned to (mentored RLs) the organisation's purpose. It is this purpose combined with the RLs personal values that serve to inform the organisational culture. E.g. for The Stage it is Martha's personal belief in young people being a marginalised community coupled with her belief in her capacity to steward this group using the medium of unconditional love that pervades all that the organisation does and has achieved. This culture is built on the RLs personal values which inform their leadership approach and is a key function of 'how' RLs engage and lead their organisation. Coupled with this is the primary function or service the organisation offers (e.g. The Learning Tree providing experiential outdoor education) which for the entrepreneurial RLs is underpinned by

their human and social capital. Therefore, the RLs human and social capital inform what the organisation does, which when combined with the RLs personal values informing organisational culture and leadership approach define the 'how' dimension of responsible leadership.

#### **5.1.6 Findings Conclusions**

Reviewing both findings chapters, it is apparent from the data that a responsible leader's internalised values are the guiding principle behind their coming to and being a responsible leader. These values have driven them to want to improve the world at some level and their activities demonstrate that for them the best way to achieve this is by taking a leading role in an endeavour aimed at social betterment.

The entrepreneurial RLs use their values to inform their organisational purpose, culture and leadership approach where they actively seek like-minded others to join them in achieving their social betterment aspirations. Mentored RLs will align their already similar values with their mentors and will use these to guide their leadership.

The RLs demonstrable leadership may not always be aligned with their espoused values of equality and social betterment and may present a predisposition favouring their internalised values, especially around staff recruitment and management.

Holding personal values of equality and social betterment, born of recognising and seeing the need in others, is 'why' RLs come to be responsible leaders. Improving the situation of these disadvantaged others, in the pursuit of social betterment, is 'what' RLs see themselves as being responsible for. Groups or communities where the RL perceives inequality or suffering to be present (that they have the capability to positively influence), is 'who' the RLs see themselves as being responsible to. Defining (or aligning with) an organisational purpose of social betterment and creating and maintaining an organisational culture with the same focus are corner stones of the RLs practice. When coupled with the RLs capabilities (social and human capital) this defines the service of the organisation and its approach in delivering this service. Together this is the 'how' of responsible leadership.

Together these four dimensions (the research objectives) give us an insight into the main research question: What is responsible leadership in practice? These findings are further analysed and explored in the following discussions chapter.

## 6 Discussion, Theory Development and Conclusions

### 6.1 Introduction

The nature of this enquiry was to explore the practice of responsible leadership, with the explicit research question of: What is Responsible Leadership in practice? To give insight to this activity the researcher sought to understand the antecedents that brought the leaders to responsible leadership and how their journey has progressed from there, essentially the process of responsible leadership. To that end the researcher has explored responsible leadership from the four dimensions (research objectives) of 'Why' the leaders have come to responsible leadership, 'Who' they feel they are responsible to, 'What' it is they believe they are responsible for and 'How' they lead responsibly in practice. This approach directly responds to and goes beyond research questions posed in the literature where it is indicated that there is no consensus but a need to understand who RLs are responsible to and for what (Pless et al., 2012; Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman & Galvin, 2008).

In the preceding findings chapters, the RLs' journeys of coming to and being a responsible leader was presented. This chapter takes those findings and explores them in depth within the four research objectives (dimensions of responsible leadership) detailed here:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
- Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for (the who dimension)
- Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension)
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)

This gives a suitable framework from which to further analyse, communicate and understand the nature of responsible leadership within the cohort studied.

However important to recognise here is that the RL journey is not one that delineates into these four dimensions precisely and, as will become apparent, there is overlap and interplay across the dimensions.

In this chapter I will argue that RLs are individuals who take on a personal mission of social betterment to improve inequality or suffering. They do this as a result of experiences that have formed their personal values in their formative year's and it is these values that have brought them to Responsible Leadership. These values inform their organisational purpose, permeate their leadership approach and organisational culture and serve as guiding principles on what the organisation should do, how it should do it and who should be involved.

## **6.2 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings**

### **6.2.1 Responsible Leader Values (The 'Why' Dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

A key area of exploration with the RLs in the project was 'why' they had chosen to be a responsible leader (following a discussion around the various interpretations of responsible leadership). Whilst conducting the interviews and on analysing the participants' responses it was apparent that the personal values of the RLs was the underlying reason they came to be responsible leaders and a theme cutting across the four dimensions under investigation (why, who, what and how). To understand the nature of this theme, this section explores the personal values apparent within the RLs and how these have brought them to responsible leadership.

It is recognised within the existing literature on responsible leadership that RLs apply their personal values as a guiding principle in their approach to leadership (Cameron, 2011; Pless, 2007; Waldman, 2011b). However with no significant agreement on an interpretation of values within the extant literature (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) it is necessary to identify a relevant encompassing interpretation from which to analyse and interpret the findings.

Personal values are the principles behind what we believe and inform our behaviour (Nahavandi et al., 2013). Schwartz's (1992) concept of values holds six key features, these are: (1) values are beliefs that are linked to affect, (2) they underpin goals that motivate us, (3) they transcend actions and situations, (4) they exist as

criteria from which to perceive good or bad, (5) are ordered by importance to the individual (such as justice may be more important than recognition for some, or vice versa) and (6) are relative in that one may trade off one value against another (e.g. we may forgo hedonism where we place higher value in the outcomes of conformity). These six features are also implicit within the wider literature on values (Feather, 1995; Rokeach, 1973). Woodward and Shaffakat's (2016, p. 156) interpretation (following their extensive review of the extant literature on personal values) would also support these six features. They define values as 'fundamental principles or standards, and the essential elements of an individual, which guide his or her thinking'.

Understanding and measuring values was popularised by Rokeach (1973) whose value survey detailed two sets of values, instrumental values (the conduct or behaviour that enables us to achieve a desirable end state) and terminal values (the desired end state). In Rokeach's (1973) value survey there are eighteen of each type of value, these include instrumental values of responsibility, forgiveness, ambition, honesty, courage and love and terminal values of equality, recognition, self-respect, accomplishment, security and freedom. Rokeach ascribes an individual's wants as a key factor in determining values and that an individual's actions being the most accurate indicator of their values, (effectively determining proxies for their underpinning values) suggesting motivation as a key facet, which is generally agreed upon (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Rokeach's work is still recognised as relevant in the modern business world (Tuulik et al., 2016).

Schwartz's work on values (1992) was a significant milestone in the knowledge development in this area and is still widely accepted within the field many years after its inception (Bobowik et al., 2011). Within his six features of values (above) Schwartz (1992) details ten universal (cross-cultural) basic human values, these are self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism. He places these ten values on a bi-polar axis where two opposing values become mutually exclusive, such as 'self-direction' and 'conformity', where it is not possible to display both values simultaneously. As with Rokeach, Schwartz also developed a value survey applying his framework of values to measure an individual's values. A recent meta-

analysis (Vauclair et al., 2011) of Rokeach and Schwartz's work indicated that there were sizeable correlation across the two frameworks implying validity, also of interest in this analysis was the emergence of a new finding, this was the identification of a new value; Self-Fulfilled Connectedness. This value represents attachment to others and aspects of self-fulfilment and is primarily a relational value that is linked to happiness. The reasons for the emergence of this new value was inconclusive but is of interest here as it relates directly to aspects of responsible leadership, particularly in its relational aspect as all the RLs studied demonstrated empathy with those they were seeking to support. Maak and Pless (2006b) indicate a relational approach as a key descriptor of being a RL, where RLs proactively engage others in the process of visioning and decision making in a socially responsible and authentic way.

The application of personal virtuous values is recognised as a key facet of a RL (Cameron, 2011; Waldman, 2011b). RLs application of their values include reflective ethical decision making (Crossan, Mazutis, & Seijts, 2013; Doh & Stumpf, 2005b; Maak & Pless, 2006b) and the self-transcendent values of deep understanding and appreciation (Crilly et al., 2008). An individuals' values determine their decisions and choices (Fritzsche & Oz, 2007; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) which when coupled with a virtues based orientation (Crossan et al., 2013) born of deep personal reflection (linked to self-transcendence) serves to guide ethical decision making in RLs. For Freeman and Auster (2011, p. 15), values are central to the idea of responsible leadership and RLs act on their values and thus are authentic in their leadership approach. This personal values base to responsible leadership is a theme recognised across the RL literature (Cameron, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006b; Miska et al., 2014). With much of the data indicating a shared commitment to the RLs' ideological values we can also attribute an approach of Values Based Leadership (VBL) (House & Aditya, 1997) to the RLs studied. Lestrangle and Tolstikov-Mast (2013) indicate twelve core values to VBL, these are trust, mutual respect, teamwork, empowerment, risk-taking, listening/feedback, self-reflection, balance/perspective, true self-confidence, integrity, and true humility. Across the data there are comments that would indicate the RLs in holding some or all of these values.



Within the findings of this study it was clear that the RLs involved came to be so in response to a perceived inequality or suffering, where they became aware of others they perceived to be in need and decided to do something to respond to this. E.g. Bridget comments on why she became a RL, '*I want every child to understand they are not a victims but they are the power to change the world*', as does Martha, '*at the moment one of my key drives behind this is that I don't believe as a society we give young people enough of a voice and I feel that they are a forgotten generation*' and Lewis, '*it inspired a notion that my time would be better spent doing something that is contributing rather than was perhaps purely self-interested*'. This decision to act and the nature of that action would be the most accurate identifier of the values held by the RL (Rokeach, 1973). Where the entrepreneurial RLs have established an organisation, we can see values of self-direction, achievement, power and stimulation all identified in Schwartz's (1992) work on values. Also apparent in the findings across all of the RLs are the values of benevolence (enhancing the welfare of those one is in contact with) and universalism (understanding and protection of people's welfare), together categorised by Schwartz (1996) as self-transcendent values. Values of self-transcendence are identifiable in leaders who pro-actively engage in CSR and responsible leadership (Crilly et al., 2008) and was present in the findings e.g. Lewis's defined aspiration to '*make the world a better place*'. Schwartz (1996) suggests the values of benevolence and conformity underpin normative behaviours and promote close relationships. This would seem to be the case in the findings where the RLs are transparent (in words and behaviours) about their values' of equality (e.g. equal pay for all at Arts for All) and improving the lives of others. The data also indicates that staff should share this espoused and demonstrable value set, as is explored later in this chapter.

For some of the RLs it would appear that these values were brought to the fore as a result of coming into contact with suffering in others (e.g. Lewis and extreme poverty in Asia, Martha and street kids in Brazil) or through their own suffering (e.g. Bridget and child abuse) where they indicate this experience in early life as a key driver in their coming to be a RL. For others it was an awareness and sensitivity to the need in others that was born of their formative years and upbringing. All of the RLs in the study had an aspiration for social betterment at

either the micro or macro level, from which we can conclude that they felt an element of personal responsibility to enhance the well-being of others less fortunate than themselves. This indicates the presence of Rokeach's (1973) terminal value of 'equality' and the instrumental value of 'responsibility'. Also apparent are the normative values of a sense of justice (Kohlberg, 1981) in righting a wrong and a sense of care (Gilligan, 1982) both of which being recognised as potential drivers of responsible leadership (Pless, 2007).

The formation of values in young adults is most significantly influenced by their parents along with their experiences in their formative years (Bobowik et al., 2011). Childhood is recognised in the developmental psychology literature as a key time in which motivational drivers are formed (Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1982). Ketola (2012) indicates experiences in formative years as a key contributor to becoming a RL. Freeman and Auster (2011) see the beginnings of RL with individuals considering their values and seeking to understand the influences of their past, the relationships they are involved in and their aspirations. Pless (2007, p. 349) also suggests formative years as a key influence in coming to RL, albeit with a limited evidence base (a single case study of a prominent RL, Anita Roddick), 'the assumption is that responsible leadership behaviour is rooted in emotional and moral experiences in the past starting as early as childhood and then develops over time'. Certainly this appears to be the case for the RLs interviewed; for Will at the Quaker School, for Richard in Scouting and other youth groups, for Bridget as an abused child, for Lewis on a gap year travelling, for Martha her childhood and experiences in Brazil at age 18 and for Wesley and Peter their family upbringing.

With our personal values being directly linked to our work life values (Frieze, Olson, Murrell, & Selvan, 2006) our experiences in our formative years can go on to inform how we function in the work setting later in life. This indicates values as being transferable and where Schwartz (1996) indicates values as being trans-situational guiding principles for life, this would seem to be the case here. However it is important to reflect that while some authors indicate personal values as relatively stable in adulthood (Rokeach, 1973) others would argue this not to be the case and there is value adaptation in adult life (McAdams, 1995; McCrae & Costa Jr, 1999).

The psychology literature recognises the variability of behaviours in relation

to environment and that this can influence values (Gough, McFadden, & McDonald, 2013). On a personal level, one could reflect that values may well vary (E.g. we value excitement more when we are younger) but much of the literature indicates this change is relatively small (Schwartz, 2005). Of particular relevance to RL was Gouveia et al.'s (2015) study which also found limited change in values over time but identified a small increase in normative values with age. Within this study it would seem that the values referred to by the RLs in what brought them to responsible leadership have been resilient over time, especially as all of the RLs were over 35 years of age with some well into their 50s and all directly citing formative year's experiences as key drivers.

Freeman and Auster (2011) interpret this situation as a pragmatist approach aligned with Rorty and Dewey, where the development of 'self' is a private project and community creation (as undertaken by an RL) is a public one. Thus the RL does not try to solve the challenge of understanding the source of their values creation (internalism or externalism) but sees these as two sides of the same coin that will enable social betterment, where 'we create self in part by creating connection, and as we create connection, we create self' (Freeman & Auster, 2011, p. 22) perhaps interpreted as a communitarian perspective on individuality. For all the RLs in this study, it is from their personal lives that they indicate their aspiration for responsible leadership, supporting the link between our personal values and our work values (Frieze et al., 2006; Thorpe & Loo, 2003).

Supporting this conclusion, we can see in the findings there is little to separate many of the RLs personal lives from their work lives (e.g. '*my wife describes Green Partners as my first child*') it is simply who they are that was crystallised in their formative years. These values of equality, responsibility (Rokeach, 1973), benevolence, universalism (Schwartz, 1992) virtuosity (Crossan et al., 2013; Waldman, 2011b) empathy (Vauclair et al., 2011) deep understanding, reflection and appreciation (Crilly et al., 2008) are the fundamental guiding principles (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) they now live their lives by and are leading to social betterment for those communities they support. These values are those linked with higher level moral reasoning (Schmidt, McAdams, & Foster, 2009), ethical decision making and are seen as virtuous (Crossan et al., 2013). In exploring the research objective of

'understanding the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership', for those RLs in this study it is this virtuous value formation in their formative years that has sensitised them to the inequalities in the world and that this sensitivity is at a level where they feel compelled to do something significant to alleviate this in some way. It is this compulsion to respond to inequality that distinguishes RLs from other leaders, in that they have developed a sense of responsibility to initiate and lead activity that will respond to a perceived need (e.g. social, environmental). With little distinction between their personal and professional lives and their personal and professional values it is apparent that these RLs have found their vocation and pursuing this is their *raison d'être*. Certainly, it is holding these values born of their formative years' experience that has led to the activation of the RLs, this is 'Why' these responsible leaders have chosen to be so. Of course, this does not imply that any individual exposed to the same situation(s) would respond in a similar fashion, in a study such as this the findings are not wholly generalisable. However, these findings do correlate with the RL literature (Maak, 2007) where it is postulated that normative drivers in RLs are born of their formative experiences, as is also indicated in the psychology literature (Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1982). This conclusion informs the research objective 'to explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership.'

### **6.2.2 Responsible Leader Values - The Influence of Antecedents (The 'Why' Dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

As demonstrated in the previous section, the RLs identified personal values formed in early life as the antecedents to becoming a RL. However the RLs involved in the project were individuals with distinct personalities and aspirations and were practising their version of being a RL as they thought best, responsible leadership does not exist as the same concept to all RLs (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). As a result, there were seven distinct versions of being a responsible leader across the sampled group. However, within the analysis it became apparent that there were two types of RL within the project. This was the emergence of the five entrepreneurial RLs who have created their own enterprise and the two mentored RLs who have been identified as a potential RL, recruited and mentored into that role. Where this is the

case we can immediately recognise that the entrepreneurial RLs have taken the initiative and founded their own enterprise as a response to their perceived need in others, thus making a significant lifestyle choice. This is exemplified by Richard's comment where he indicates the duration of his involvement, *'I am going to do it till I'm dead'*. The mentored RLs however were making a career choice in their coming to RL rather than a lifestyle commitment, as demonstrated by Peter who indicates *'I fell into leading the organisation. However, Phil who started the whole thing off, he did have a burning desire to do good in the world'*. For Peter this was an opportunity that aligned with his interests and values but he was not demonstrating a strong desire to improve the world (unlike his mentor Phil). Apparent within these comments and more extensively in the findings is a marked difference in the antecedents and personal drive bringing the two types of RL to responsible leadership. Both hold similarities in coming to responsible leadership, namely a value set crystallised in their formative years, but also distinct differences.

Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014) indicate in their conceptual exploration of RL antecedents that both individual and contextual factors combine to inform RL behaviour. They review broad influences such as national culture, legal systems and media along with organisational context (policies and practice) along with the characteristics of the RLs and conclude that RL behaviour is both a function of the environment and the person. Further to this, they indicate that this is more balanced than was previously thought where personal characteristics were identified as more significant, a view shared by O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005). Crilly et al's (2008) empirical study of 643 managers suggests a trait based function to responsible leadership, where those who hold self-transcendent values are more likely to make decisions in society's interest (Ashkanasy et al., 2006). It would seem there is agreement that the influence of personal and environmental aspects are instrumental in determining RL behaviours, however the literature is inconclusive as to the weighting of this influence. Also of importance here is that the dominant discourse within the literature is seeking to determine RL behaviours when 'in role' and is not significantly concerned with the influence that drove an individual to become a RL as a career or life choice.

The entrepreneurial RLs all cited an instrumental experience or period in their lives that led them to activation as a RL whereas the mentored RLs indicated the broader experience of upbringing and adoption of their family values (Bobowik et al., 2011). Could it be that there are varying levels of response to suffering or inequality that is linked to our level of exposure and awareness of the issue? For the RLs in this study it could be that this is the case. The entrepreneurial RLs have responded pro-actively to a perceived need that they personally have identified (based on their value set) and been directly exposed to. The mentored RLs have reacted positively to an opportunity that aligns with their values that were nurtured in their youth. Thus, we have a key distinction where the entrepreneurial RLs have created an opportunity whilst the mentored RLs have responded to one.

If we consider the level of exposure to inequality or suffering as a determiner of the level of drive within a RL (to improve the situation of that community) then the experience that brought the RL to responsible leadership would indicate the potential impact they could have. This difference in RL impact becomes pronounced where we have a victim of child abuse (Bridget) exposed to personal suffering of an extreme nature, who then had a profound epiphanic experience in the cave when teaching people with learning difficulties, where she recognised the potential healing/learning this could bring. She has then gone on to apply herself professionally to the extent that she is recognised in her arena on the international stage (e.g. author, CEO and keynote speaker) influencing countless individuals as a direct result of her passion, level of personal drive and activity. As a RL her influence and impact could be significant and perhaps more so than the other RLs in the study. Within the findings, it is clear she is driven to make a significant impact in the world and to people's lives (e.g. *'I want every child to understand they are not a victim but they are the power to change the world'*) perhaps linked to her espoused aspiration for the emancipation of others who may have suffered like she did (Thomas & Hall, 2008).

Beyond this, the four remaining entrepreneurial RLs who have created an organisation and are taking it forward, cite significantly less impactful instrumental experiences (e.g. exposure to poverty, street kids in Brazil, attending a Quaker school) bringing them to RL. If there is a link between the driver to become a RL and

level of RL function and associated outcomes, the outcomes of these four entrepreneurial RLs activation would be perhaps less so than Bridget's. With their activity and influence being regional and Bridget's international this would appear to be the case. Following this reasoning the mentored RLs are running their organisation/department, primarily established by another, whilst citing influential family values and mentorship as their main drivers. This would indicate a yet more subtle influence in their coming to RL and also a lesser influence on outcomes with their joining others in improving the world rather than leading the change themselves.

Within this group of seven RLs we can interpret links between the nature of value formation and the level of RL activation and influence. It could be that the level of exposure to suffering is linked to the level of alleviation of suffering one feels compelled to act upon, based on one's exposure/experience. Or, could it be that each of the RLs although demonstrating similar RL associated values (e.g. universalism) may also be prioritising other values that are not necessarily linked to RL (e.g. power) (Schwartz, 1996) and subsequently the mix and prioritisation of values varies across the RLs studied? This could be the case for Bridget who as a highly successful social entrepreneur may be acting on the value of recognition more than the value of universalism.

To understand this in more depth detailed below (Table 6.1) is a mapping of each of the RLs expressed values (based on the findings, researcher's notes, reflections and analysis) across Rokeach and Schwartz's frameworks, their cited reason in coming to RL and an indicator of their likely influence/impact. We can see within this mapping that Bridget's exposure to suffering was severe and she is likely to have a broader influence with her international presence and demonstrates a mix of RL and other values. Bridget is demonstrably a high achiever. The remaining four entrepreneurial RLs cite coming to RL due to instrumental experiences and are influencing/impacting at a regional level, they too demonstrate a mix of RL and other values. The mentored RLs cite their upbringing as a precursor to RL and their influence and impact has been facilitated by a third party (their mentor) who could well be a RL themselves. These findings and analysis suggest a link across the nature of RL values formation, the level of RL activation and the level of RL influence or

impact. This is where the level of exposure to suffering/inequality experienced by the RL influences the level of alleviation of suffering/inequality the RL feels driven to achieve. However, what is important to recognise here is, this is an interpretation of the researcher and there are limitations to these findings as life choices and decisions are influenced by a complex array of opportunities, interpretations, preferences and experiences (as discussed later in this chapter). However, it does ask an important question; is our level of willingness to help others influenced by our personal exposure to suffering or inequality? Within this limited study, it would appear that this could be the case, but with so many variables unaccounted for in the data it is inconclusive.

However, if there is a link between these factors (which would require further study to ascertain) this would add further insights into both why and how RLs respond to the antecedent that led them to responsible leadership, further informing the research objectives:

- Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that led to responsible leadership (the why dimension)
- Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension)



**Table 6-1 Responsible Leader Values**

RL	Cited RL Driver	RL Function & Influence	Demonstrable Rokeach Terminal Values	Demonstrable Rokeach Instrumental Values	Demonstrable Schwartz Values
Bridget (E)	Child abuse victim Experiential learnings (caving) transformative potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder &amp; CEO</li> <li>• 20+ staff</li> <li>• Published Author</li> <li>• Key Note Speaker</li> <li>• Extensive global network</li> <li>• International presence</li> </ul>	Equality * Freedom * Social Recognition Accomplishment An exciting life Salvation A world at peace *	Ambition Self-control Capability Courage Imagination Independence Helpfulness * Responsibility *	Power Achievement Self-direction Universalism* Benevolence* Security Stimulation
Martha (E)	Upbringing Religion Critical thinker Supporting Brazilian street kids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder &amp; CEO</li> <li>• 9 staff</li> <li>• Presence in Sheffield City Region</li> <li>• Networks across UK</li> </ul>	Mature love Self-respect Inner Harmony * Equality * Social recognition Family security * Accomplishment	Cheerfulness Ambition Love * Capability Courage Honesty * Imagination Independence Responsibility *	Power Achievement Self-direction Universalism* Benevolence* Tradition Conformity Stimulation
Lewis (E)	Direct exposure to extreme poverty in Asia Lack of confidence in neo-liberal economics Critical thinker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder &amp; CEO</li> <li>• 12 staff</li> <li>• Presence in Sheffield City Region</li> <li>• Networks across UK</li> </ul>	Self-respect Equality * Freedom * Wisdom Salvation * World at peace	Self-control Capability Courage Honesty * Independence Intellect Responsibility *	Power Achievement Self-direction Universalism * Benevolence * Stimulation

\* = Value associated with responsible leadership    E = Entrepreneurial RL

M= Mentored RL

RL	Cited RL Driver	RL Function & Influence	Demonstrable Rokeach Terminal Values	Demonstrable Rokeach Instrumental Values	Demonstrable Schwartz Values
Richard (E)	Formative years in various subcultures Lack of confidence in neo-liberal economics Critical thinker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder &amp; 'leader ' [sic] of a Coop</li> <li>• approx' 6 members</li> <li>• Presence in Sheffield City Region</li> <li>• Networks across UK</li> <li>• Politically active</li> </ul>	Self-respect Equality * Freedom * Social recognition Wisdom Salvation * Accomplishment World at peace * An exciting life	Ambition Self-control Capability Courage Honesty * Imagination Independence Responsibility *	Power Achievement Self-direction Universalism * Benevolence * Stimulation
Will (E)	Quaker boarding school and associated philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder &amp; CEO</li> <li>• 2 staff + associates</li> <li>• Presence in Nottingham and N. of England</li> <li>• Networks across UK</li> </ul>	Mature love Self-respect Happiness Inner Harmony Equality * Freedom * A world at peace *	Love Self-control Capability Politeness Honesty * Independence Logic Responsibility *	Self-direction Universalism * Benevolence * Conformity Security Stimulation
Peter (M)	Responding to an opportunity Upbringing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruited MD</li> <li>• 25 staff</li> <li>• Presence in N. of England</li> <li>• Networks in Sheffield region</li> </ul>	Self-respect Equality * A comfortable life	Self-control Capability Honesty * Broad-mindedness Helpfulness Responsibility *	Universalism * Benevolence * Conformity Security
Wesley (M)	Upbringing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruited Dept. Director</li> <li>• 8 staff</li> <li>• Presence in Sheffield</li> <li>• Networks in Sheffield</li> </ul>	Self-respect Equality * A comfortable life	Self-control Capability Honesty * Responsibility *	Universalism * Benevolence * Conformity Security

In addition to the findings discussed above, and also noticeable within the Responsible Leader Values (Table 6.1), was that the mentored RLs are expressing significantly fewer values than the entrepreneurial RLs. There is still a mix of RL associated values and more general values. However, what is noticeable is the lack of expressed values of self-direction, power, ambition, recognition, achievement and accomplishment within the mentored RLs, all values associated with entrepreneurialism (Wickham, 2006).

This interpretation adds further weight to the nature of the two types of RL in the study, in that the entrepreneurial RLs are not just expressing their entrepreneurial values in founding their organisations but continue to do so in growing and leading them. The mentored RLs however are expressing values that are aligned with continuity and thus the organisation or department they manage is stable and continues along its original path, in this context perhaps they are managing rather than leading? This notion is explored further in the section Organisational Purpose.

### **6.2.3 Responsible Leader Values - Compromise and Goal Achievement (The 'How' Dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

As individuals we hold many values and as discussed in the previous sections these may well be mutually exclusive and change in response to situation and circumstance (Schwartz, 1996), as is apparent within the findings chapters. This dynamic nature of values would explain the dichotomy present between Lewis and Richard's expressed and demonstrable values, where they espouse no power asymmetry in their organisation but in practice there was. This could indicate their RL values of 'universalism' and 'benevolence' are occasionally compromised for the polar opposite and mutually exclusive (Schwartz, 1996) entrepreneurial values of 'power' and 'achievement' (Wickham, 2006). Within their interviews, they indicated a shared or distributed leadership approach, where members lead when appropriate and then step back (Northouse, 2015), but later analysis shows that in practice they are the primary and dominant leader in their organisation (e.g. A Director at Arts for All comments: *'If we were to lose Lewis it would be a very serious thing'*). Rokeach (1973) would prioritise actions over words as the true indicator of values, supporting

the research findings that indicated these two RLs as the central leader (e.g. A Coop member comments on Richard's impact on future business planning: '*he becomes a blockage as everything is in his head and we have to wait for it to come out as it were*'). Application of Rokeach's Value Survey could indicate these behaviourally dominant RL values as instrumental (e.g. ambition, responsibility) being applied to achieve the RLs terminal values (e.g. achievement, world at peace and recognition). Within this construct it could be that these two RLs see the greater good as being prioritised over their daily behaviours and that at some level the ends justifies the means. For these RLs this indicates an aspect of 'how' they lead their organisation, informing the research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

Certainly the balancing of multiple stakeholders' needs is a key challenge for RLs (Waldman & Galvin, 2008) and can lead to prioritising one group over another. In their overall leadership approach it would seem Richard and Lewis have prioritised the beneficiaries of their organisation's services above their employees' interests, perhaps indicating a stronger philanthropic orientation? They have taken a more authoritarian leadership role than they espouse, pursuing the social betterment outcomes whilst not being as inclusive of their colleagues as they imply. This balance of doing the right thing the right way was explored by Ciulla (2005) where she indicates three interactive elements of moral leadership; do the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons and that often only two of these may be apparent. She goes on to comment that there are no definitive measures of which two are appropriate, to which situation, or if on occasion all three are required and that the only real judge would seem to be the summations of historians long after the fact.

Richard and Lewis, it would appear, are doing the right thing for the right reasons but perhaps not in the right way. With the recognised challenge of prioritising competing needs across multiple stakeholders as a complex and necessary RL skill set (Maak, 2007; Maak & Pless, 2006b), it is possible that Lewis and Richard are still learning and developing their professional capabilities and thus lack experience and/or knowledge to balance these needs more effectively.

Interestingly, the values dichotomy of Richard and Lewis discussed above was also present, but to a lesser degree, within the other RLs studied. This manifested in

the application of a personal values preference in the recruitment and retention of employees, positively selecting those with shared values and facilitating the exit of those without, as was readily apparent within the findings (e.g. Martha comments on the likely outcomes for staff not adopting her values: *'if you try and self-lead without those values you will come up against something, not necessarily me, but something'*). It could be that similar principles were in play as with Richard and Lewis, in that the end justified the means and doing the right thing for the right reasons was sufficient, although not necessarily pursuing this in the right way (Ciulla, 2005). It could be that the RLs focus on the organisational purpose, (discussed later in this chapter), has prioritised the value of 'achievement' (expressed in attaining social betterment) over 'universalism' (potentially expressed by equally valuing all job applicants' personal values) as the two cannot coexist within the scope of a single behaviour (Schwartz, 1996), in this case the practice of recruitment. Where values are mutually exclusive it may not always be possible to do the 'right thing' the 'right way' for the 'right reasons', perhaps this finding goes some way in explaining Ciulla's (2005) findings where two of the 'right' things are often present but seldom all three. Waldman and Balven (2014) recognise that RLs do sometimes need to behave responsibly to one stakeholder group but in doing so recognise this may have negative repercussion for another, thus a single action can be both responsible and irresponsible depending upon your perspective. Recognising these RLs as entrepreneurs may also bring further insight here, where entrepreneurs often see their decision making and insight superior to others (Wickham, 2006) and as a result can present as a more autocratic leader. Maak and Pless (2006b) see the resolving of these mutually exclusive stakeholder needs as a key facet of being a RL and for these RLs this was a clear mechanism for 'how' they ran their organisation, further informing the research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation.

This favouring of one group of individuals over another is identifiable within the construct of LMX theory (as detailed in the literature review), where leaders identify followers as either the 'in group' or 'out group' and work with them supportively and informally (in group) or through more formal systems (out group) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). It would seem that this

practice of favouring one group over another is occurring very early in the leader-follower relationship in order to sift at recruitment and lead to recruitment of 'in group' individuals only. Where 'out group' individuals do get through this sift, they are often facilitated into leaving the organisations, from this the RL is further fine tuning followers for 'in group' members only. LMX theory indicates that this approach can lead to high quality leader member exchanges reducing staff turnover, improving performance and organisational commitment and improved employee attitudes to work (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Liden et al., 1993). Certainly, outcomes of this nature are present within the findings. However, this practice cannot be seen as inclusive, even if the RL aspiration is ultimately to improve more people's lives (where improved organisations performance leads to increased number of and better outcomes for beneficiaries). This practice conflicts directly with the idea of RLs being inclusive as reported in the RL literature (Maak & Pless, 2006b; Pless & Maak, 2004) although it could also be recognised as a trade-off amongst competing stakeholder needs. Where one of the most challenging functions of being a RL is to balance the sometimes mutually exclusive needs of multiple stakeholders (Pless & Maak, 2011; Voegtlin, 2011), it is likely this is empirical evidence of this theory in action, clearly indicating 'how' these RLs lead their organisation.

Reflecting on the findings, it is hard to see how a leader could be supportive of any value set in their employees, particularly where values can be mutually exclusive. In an organisation with social betterment aims any individual constantly prioritising self-enhancement would find it hard to achieve their aspirations as their values would be in opposition and mutually exclusive to others' throughout the organisation (Schwartz, 1996). It could be that at some level the RLs have an awareness of this performance conflict born of personal values and as a result are prioritising the organisational purpose above the employees needs, thus prioritising the social betterment outcomes that drove the inception of the organisation in the first instance. However, if this is the case it is not without irony that the RLs are applying their values around achievement to exclude those who, in their view, may demonstrate this value too much.

This predisposition to those with shared values in recruitment will of course bring with it consequences. Where a homogeneous group of employees and leaders

form to achieve their shared interests, there are costs (e.g. lack of innovation (Amabile, 1998)) (Voegtlin et al., 2012) and benefits (e.g. improved effectiveness (Kotter, 2008a)). This aspect of RL is explored in the section on Organisational Culture.

#### **6.2.4 Responsible Leader Values - Organisational Purpose (The 'Who' Dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

The purpose of each of the organisations established by the five entrepreneurial RLs was directly linked to the internalised value set that had brought them to responsible leadership. This instrumental experience had instilled the personal values in the entrepreneurial RLs (as discussed above) to want to do something to improve the world and address the inequality or suffering of those whom they had been exposed to. Addressing the issue that was at the heart of this instrumental experience (e.g. child abuse, extreme poverty) became the priority for these RLs and as a result has informed their organisational purpose. This purpose (clearly identified by each of the RLs) directly indicated to whom their organisation was established to serve or benefit, informing the 'who' dimension of the research objectives (Objective 2: Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for). Demonstrating this the entrepreneurial RLs' instrumental experience, subsequent organisational purpose and associated beneficiaries are cross-referenced in the table 6.2 below:

**Table 6-2 Responsible Leader Driver Links**

<b>Ent' RL</b>	<b>Cited RL Driver</b>	<b>Organisation Purpose</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>
Bridget	Child abuse victim Experiential learning's (caving) transformative potential	Child personal development, through the medium of experiential education (E.g. Forest Schools).	Pre-school and school children - primarily in the UK and also overseas.
Martha	Upbringing Religion Critical thinker Supporting Brazilian street kids	Enabling vulnerable children, through provision of performing arts based education and pastoral support.	Children excluded from education or at risk of exclusion - across South Yorkshire and Brazil.
Lewis	Direct exposure to extreme poverty in Asia Lack of confidence in neo- liberal economics Critical thinker	Facilitating reflective and more critical thinking in others to influence their world view (to be more critical), through arts based publications and events.	Readers of (free) arts based literature - 4 to 5 thousand distribution points across South Yorkshire.
Richard	Formative years in various subcultures (social and environmental) Lack of confidence in neo- liberal economics Critical thinker	Create a mutual local economy, through establishing and leading [sic] a coop providing food, drink and events.	Local community (Sheffield) members participating in events and purchasing healthy produce from ethical sources of production.
Will	Quaker school values around equality and inclusion	Enabling people with neuro-disabilities, through provision of IT based neuro- rehabilitation services.	Traumatic brain injury victims.



Within table 6.2 above we can see clear links between three of the five entrepreneurial RLs instrumental experiences, the organisational purpose and the beneficiaries associated with this. E.g. Bridget was a victim of child abuse and goes on to enable children's personal development, Martha was exposed to street kids suffering in Brazil and now supports marginalised children in the UK and Brazil and Richard was disenfranchised by authoritarian neo-liberal economics and goes onto create a coop. The exception here would seem to be Will and Lewis which bears further investigation.

The links becomes clear for Lewis when we review his comments reflecting on the experiences (exposure to extreme poverty) that led him to becoming a RL: *'So I think that imparts on you a knowledge that there are bigger issues at play that could benefit from engaging with, although I haven't gone into a line of enterprise that directly combats poverty. So there is no clear line but I think it inspired a notion that my time would be better spent doing something that is contributing rather than was perhaps purely self-interested'*. Clearly at play here is Lewis's critical thinking and a realisation of the value of universalisms (Schwartz, 1996) that he would go onto apply within his own community, where he is seeking to engender critical thinking in others in the aspiration that they too will realise the value of universalism.

Will cites his values developed in the Quaker school as the main antecedents to his becoming a RL, there are no immediately obvious links with this and his supporting people with disabilities. However, when we look more holistically at Will's career history (Counsellor, Social Worker and Rehabilitation Case Manager) a theme emerges, this is that his professional life has been supporting people who are in some way challenged with living a fuller life and it would seem he is continuing this within his own organisation. Will's descriptors of the Quaker values give further insight here, where he comments *'respecting individuals and seeing what is good in people ... and focusing in on that element'* as important to him. He also indicates how his philosophy has evolved as a result of his Quaker schooling *'everyone I feel has something to contribute'*. It is clear from this commentary (and the broader findings) that social inclusion is a value Will developed whilst at the Quaker school and this has been key in influencing his professional life and is the purpose of his

organisation, where he is supporting victims of traumatic brain injury. Thus, all five entrepreneurial RLs' organisational purposes are linked to the instrumental experience that has led them to becoming a RL.

Within the findings it is clear that the entrepreneurial RLs have developed an emotional connection with those they perceive to have been marginalised, be it a child suffering abuse (Bridget: *'I want every child to understand they are not a victim but they are the power to change the world'*) or an individual not considered (Will comments on his org' purpose: *'My first and last thought is that it is serving the clients'*). Miller et al. (2012, p. 633) suggest this emotional connection and the subsequent compassion for those involved is the precursor to the activation of social entrepreneurs where, 'compassion elicits prosocial motivation, which fosters more flexible thought processes and greater commitment to action'. Compassion is a key element of social entrepreneurship (Dees, 2001; Fowler, 2000) and is readily identifiable in the entrepreneurial RLs comments. Taking this forward, it is not unreasonable to recognise that the fire that has lit the flame of compassion within the RLs is the one they become drawn to, thus they are addressing the inequality or injustices they have witnessed by committing themselves to action; in some way addressing the inequality they have been exposed to. Implicit here is that as a person concerned with society, their own self-interest has been put aside to proactively address social concerns (Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009) or they are expressing behaviours associated with a communitarian philosophy where individuals are the product of their community and thus if they support their community they subsequently support themselves (Etzioni, 1998). Communitarians believe that the common good and individuals' liberty are not mutually exclusive choices and that a careful balance of the two can be achieved in addressing societal and individual needs. They view society as more important than state or the market and that communities are the cornerstone of this society as they produce the individuals whose characters are formed and re-enforced by the communities 'moral voice'. With leftist approaches failing to understand tradition, community identity and values and neo-liberal approaches failing to consider communities with its focus on utilitarian function, communitarianism offers a more centrist view with family and community as their primary concern. Richard and Lewis both demonstrate a

passion for supporting the local community and, of the RLs studied, their behaviours were the most demonstrably aligned with communitarianism e.g. creating a coop to develop the local community and economy with Green Partners and creating a community of equal pay and '*equal agency*' at Arts for All. Thus, it is likely that these RLs see the needs of their beneficiaries and themselves as interconnected (certainly where this extends to environmental concerns this is apparent) and addressing and subsequently balancing these needs has led to the activation of these RLs. This balancing of social concerns and one's own needs fits well with the earlier discussion regarding values trade off, where simultaneously pursuing self-interest and self-transcendence (E.g. social concerns) is not possible (Schwartz, 1996). The entrepreneurial RLs have prioritised the needs of those whom they have witnessed suffering above financial gain, an expression of their compassion (Miller et al., 2012) that has identified a deserving community (beneficiaries) whom they are now dedicated to emancipating from inequality or suffering, this being their terminal value (Rokeach, 1973). It is this focused beneficiary community, or group of individuals, 'who' the entrepreneurial RLs indicate they are responsible to. This informs the second research objective: To explore who RLs feel they are responsible for.

#### 6.2.4.1 Mentored RLs - Organisational Purpose

The two mentored RLs in the project are each serving a community that was identified by their mentor. The purpose of their respective organisation/department was also derived by their mentor, which for Peter's organisation Enable, was creating employment for people marginalised in the labour market. Peter indicates how he became MD of Enable: *I had met Phil (mentor) at BAG and he offered me a job basically, so I can't say I was inspired to specifically work in the third sector, I fell into it basically.* Peter goes on to indicate his mentor's aspirations for social betterment and how he has adopted these values: *Phil who started the whole thing off - he did have a burning desire to do good in the world. So now they are my values.* Apparent here is that the purpose and beneficiaries supported by Enable are those identified by Peter's mentor Phil and that Peter has continued this purpose.

The second of the mentored RLs Wesley, heads up a department that fulfils aspects of Better Communities stated purpose, which is to support people from disadvantaged communities in Sheffield. Within this, his department is concerned with health care provision in the identified communities. Wesley comments on the support he receives from his CEO at Better Communities *'He is the CEO and is very much a lefty and is very much a mentor to me and helped me develop'* he also comments on his personal values development in relation to his professional life *'One is down to my boss Carl and his support as a person'*.

Both of the mentored RLs attribute the purpose, values and beneficiary group they are working to support to another, their mentor. Although these mentors did not participate in this project and as a result there is limited data, it would seem likely that they are responsible leaders (E.g. Phil's burning desire to do good in the world and Carl who is seen as a *'lefty'* and has founded a social enterprise (Charity legal status) that he has grown to employ over 100 staff members).

This finding does open up a point for analysis and discussion. Are the two mentored RLs responsible leaders or are they responsible managers? There are many elements of leadership and management that are the same; influence, goal achievement, working with people etc. (Northouse, 2015). However Bennis and Nanus (1985) identify a distinction between the two where management is to accomplish activities and master routines and to lead is to create a vision for change and influence others. Kotter (2008b) also separates the two indicating management functions as planning, organising, controlling and problem solving and leadership as creating direction, aligning people and motivating/inspiring people. Within these constructs it is evident that the mentored RLs in this project were not implicated in the visioning of the organisation and its purpose and therefore have not demonstrated this type of leadership. The findings do suggest the presence of management skills around planning, organising, accomplishing activities and problem solving. There is some evidence to suggest the presence of leadership functions around influencing others and motivating people but, in comparison to the five entrepreneurial RLs, this is limited. With the visioning and direction of their respective organisations coming from their mentor, these individuals (the mentors) have at one point been the leaders of the endeavour (this is still the case for Wesley

and Better Communities) with the mentored RLs as followers. With a clear purpose and direction ahead, the mentored RLs have continued along the road set by their mentors. Noticeable is that they have not established their own direction on their respective activities and are continuing along the path originally conceived by their mentor. Where no new direction or change in organisational focus is apparent, we can interpret that these mentored RLs are still following the path determined by their mentor and as such are still followers to their mentors' leadership. Hence with a significant level of activity aligned with a management function, and limited levels of activity aligned with a leadership function, it is reasonable to conclude that the mentored RLs in this project are more responsible managers than responsible leaders and that the beneficiaries that they serve (the 'who' dimension of RL) were identified by their mentor, the founding RL of the organisation.

#### **6.2.5 Responsible Leader Capabilities - Application of Human and Social Capital (The 'What' dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

With a firm focus on social betterment and addressing inequality the entrepreneurial RLs have identified their organisational purpose and the associated beneficiaries (as discussed above) whose lives they wish to improve. Briefly discussed above, and further explored in this section, is the nature of the service provision (what they do) each of the entrepreneurial RLs organisation provides and how this relates to each of the RLs' capabilities as individuals. The exploration and descriptions of the service function of the RLs respective organisation provides details around what their organisation does on a daily basis. These specific details of the service provided by each of the RLs organisations' addresses research objective 3: Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for (the what dimension).

As was detailed in the findings chapters, the organisation's service provided by each of these RLs was intrinsically linked with their own capability set, namely their human and social capital. Where the social betterment organisational aims were the terminal value (Rokeach, 1973) for the entrepreneurial RLs, the means to achieving these aims was born of their instrumental values. These instrumental values were what the entrepreneurial RLs had come to value personally within their life experiences and subsequently recognised that the beneficiaries they have

identified may also benefit from similar experiences (E.g. Lewis comments on why Arts for All provides the service it does: *'Fundamentally, I try to facilitate more creative information out there because I think as soon as you think critically and think reflectively it brings you joy of some kind'*).

The economist Gary Becker (1962) popularised the term Human Capital and defined it as a person's stock of skills, knowledge, habits and attributes and their ability to utilise these to create economic value. However, if the aspirations of the organisation is for the creation of social value we might recognise a more nuanced interpretation of beneficial outcomes, such as Estrin, Mickiewicz, & Stephan's (2016, p. 449) descriptor of a social entrepreneur's objectives from the application of their human capital, which is to 'generate positive external effects for the community from their activities'.

Mapping the links of the five entrepreneurial RLs with their human and social capital applied to their organisation clearly shows the functionality of their capital. This is detailed in table 6.3 below where each of the entrepreneurial RLs, the service their organisation provides, and the linked human and social capital are indicated.

**Table 6-3 Responsible Leader Human and Social Capital**

Ent' RL	Org Service Provision	Linked RL Human Capital	Linked RL Social Capital
Bridget	Children's experiential education	<p>UG Degree Countryside Management - dissertation: Impact of outdoor learning on children's communication</p> <p>PGCE</p> <p>Adventurous activities instructor</p> <p>Significant demonstrable passion for the learning medium and the beneficiaries</p>	<p>Author</p> <p>International Keynote speaking events</p> <p>Extensive on-line presence</p> <p>Green party networks</p> <p>Local authority networks</p> <p>Forest Schools movement</p> <p>Outdoor education centres</p> <p>Schools networks</p> <p>Local Education Authority</p> <p>Associate network</p> <p>Forestry commission and private land owners</p> <p>Scouting and other youth groups</p>
Martha	Performing Arts based education alternative	<p>UG Degree in Drama</p> <p>MA in Social Enterprise and Cooperative Management</p> <p>Interest in the social and political aspects of performing arts</p>	<p>Schools networks</p> <p>Local Education Authority</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Public services linked with education support (police, social services, community support teams)</p> <p>UK Theatre network</p>

			Performing artists network North Sheffield community
Lewis	Arts based literature and events	Deep personal interest in creative writing and philosophy Former Big Issue employee UG degree linked with creative writing *	Sheffield based network (e.g. Big Issues links, creative writing networks)
Richard	Coop provision of locally sourced food & drink + food based events	UG Degree in Urban Studies MA in Creative and Media Enterprise Self labelled 'Cultural Entrepreneur' Involvement in local politics and Greenpeace Lecturer in Cultural Policy studies and Event Management Entrepreneurially active since childhood	Local authority networks 2 x Universities in Sheffield Organic food growers near Sheffield Political networks - Member of Greenpeace and former candidate for Local Councillor Sustainable Food Cities network Sheffield Coop network Transition movement networks
Will	IT based neuro-rehabilitation services.	Qualified Social Worker Counsellor Brain Injury Case Manager Soft skills linked to above roles Whole career has been in supporting others Interest in IT and associated devices	Brain Injury Rehabilitation Network Multi-disciplinary team networks across north of England Brain injury medico-legal networks

\*This was the implication from the interview data but not specifically commented upon.



Reviewing the type of human capital detailed in the table above it is apparent that the factors listed are either knowledge, skills or interests and the more internalised factors of habits and personal attributes are not apparent. This finding suggests that these leaders are applying a 'skills approach' (Katz, 1955; Northouse, 2015, p. 43) to this aspect of their leadership. They are applying their knowledge and abilities in taking the organisation forward rather than a traits-based leadership approach, which is more closely linked to a leader's internalised and largely fixed personality characteristics (Bryman, 1992; Northouse, 2015). However, when we reflect on the previous section, we can see the terminal values of social betterment and equality of the RLs as wholly aligned with their personal values. Therefore these internalised aspects of their human capital (personal values) are defining the purpose of the organisation, insofar as what it is aiming to achieve, whilst the mechanism to achieving this is supported by the more malleable aspects of human capital, those that can be learned and developed (knowledge and skills). Thus, we have a combination of internalised human capital informing the organisational purpose (terminal value) combined with the RLs skills and knowledge capital informing the service offering (instrumental value). Of interest here is Gimmon and Levie's (2009) meta-analysis of human capital in entrepreneurs which found that instrumental value theory was an accurate indicator of the potential success of ventures linked to the founders' human capital. With all five of the entrepreneurial RLs continuing to successfully build their respective organisations this would seem to be the case here.

The findings analysed indicate the organisational service offering from each of the entrepreneurial RLs is something they are expert in, personally see value in and hold a belief that when it is accessed by the beneficiaries, this value will address some aspect of their suffering or inequality. This service offering, that will give value to the beneficiaries and improve their lives, is 'What' the entrepreneurial RLs see themselves as being responsible for. This informs the third research objective: To explore what RLs see themselves as being responsible for.

### **6.2.6 Responsible Leader Capabilities - Social Capital (The 'How' dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

Exploring further the application of social capital by these RLs, it is implicit within the findings and in figure 6.3 above that this is very much around the development and utilisation of the RL's networks. Putnam (2001) defines social capital as the value accessible in networks and reciprocity that is found within them. This value is for those within the network and also produces valued externalities, indicating both private and public faces of social capital. In establishing their organisations, the RLs have made public what was once private, this is their aspiration for social betterment, this transfer from private to public then allows for dialogue and discussion that can serve to create a shared understanding of the 'common public good' (Laville & Nyssens, 2001, p. 320) within the network, which will strengthen the network ties (Granovetter, 2003). Social network ties are seen as a key facet of RLs (Maak, 2007) where they pull together disparate groups to create a value network of multiple stakeholders enhancing the RLs' social capital and leading to sustainable business and common good (Lord & Brown, 2001). Mobilising their stakeholder groups in pursuit of their social betterment vision indicates a relational and also ethical phenomenon for RLs (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006b). Developing, cultivating and sustaining trustful relationships that lead to responsible and meaningful action is a recognised skill of RLs (Maak & Pless, 2006b) where they will often share norms and values with internal stakeholders, as was found across the data here. Where trust is found there is also the potential for efficiencies as this can reduce transactions costs (e.g. contracting activities) (Laville & Nyssens, 2001). This ability to create and cultivate networks effectively is seen as a leadership skill or 'people skills' as defined by Northouse (2015, p. 45). Within the scope of the findings it would certainly appear that the entrepreneurial RLs do have these people skills and have applied them in their network development and utilisation, particularly so with internal stakeholders.

This has facilitated a number of benefits, such as for Lewis at Arts for All where the shared salary rate of all staff is only slightly above the basic living wage, thus reducing cost for the organisation whilst enhancing morale (e.g. staff member Wayne comments on the flat pay structure, *'I think that it does increase the team*

*spirit and we are a better company for it').* Also, at The Stage the social tie of staff is so strong that one member moved across the city to be closer to work and pulls in family members to support (voluntarily) on occasion, creating benefits for the organisation at no cost. The internal stakeholder level of ownership of the social betterment purposes of the organisations demonstrated in the interviews of non RL participants was significant. E.g. Elaine, an employee at The Stage, comments: *'I don't think that there is anywhere else I could ever work. Now that I have been here there is definitely nowhere, I couldn't'.* Also, a member of Green Partners comments, *'Everyone has bought into the vision of Green Partners and the togetherness and what have you'.* This indicates the 'buy in' of these stakeholders in the overall social betterment aspirations of their organisation and that this is an end in itself which serves to mobilise staff members (Laville & Nyssens, 2001) facilitating their effective utilisation.

The external networks of the RLs have also underpinned the success of their respective organisations. E.g. A staff member at The Learning Tree comments on the MD: *Bridget is incredibly good at speaking from her heart and does so in a compelling and passionate way and comes across really well as a story teller so to speak. So we use Bridget's strengths in talking and getting her on the right stage e.g. TEDx.* Here Bridget is applying her human capital to grow her social capital that is ultimately spreading the word of what her organisation does and how it can facilitate personal development in children. Also, Lewis indicates his network as being the main factor in where Arts for All is located: *I had good contacts in Sheffield so we stated up here and began with putting on events'.* Clearly evidenced in these examples, also within the table above and across the findings, we can see that the RLs have used their social capital in founding and growing their organisations.

Balkundi and Kilduff (2006, p. 956) propose that leadership 'requires the management of social relationships' and that the cognitive management of multiple stakeholders and the associated opportunities is a prime concern for leaders. Maak (2007) supports this and takes the discussion forward indicating the building of trustful relationships across relevant stakeholders as an important element of responsible leadership. Trust is clearly present within the comments of the internal stakeholders (E.g. A staff member at The Learning Tree comments: *Also the staff are*

*brilliant and you can trust everyone to do their bit without any concerns at all – this is very rare'*). Beyond this, the RLs all indicate extensive networks as a key mechanism in building their organisation (as detailed in the figure above).

The entrepreneurial RLs application of their human and social capital has founded and grown their organisations. As the founder they have been central to the social network they have grown and have retained this centrality (e.g. *if we were to lose Lewis this would be a very serious thing*) as the strategic leader. We can also see that this social capital is not built of the big ego found in much leadership literature (Maak & Pless, 2006b) but is much more akin to a 'humble networker' as indicated by Maak's (2007, p. 340) interpretation of a RL. The social capital of the RLs is facilitating growth of the organisation in the world and also efficiencies and effectiveness within the organisation (Laville & Nyssens, 2001) thus potentially reaching more beneficiaries and providing a better service, in turn leading to the achievement of the organisational purpose. This application of social capital goes some way in responding to the fourth research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisations.

#### **6.2.7 Responsible Leader Capabilities - Conclusion**

We can conclude that, having identified a purpose for their professional lives born of their personal terminal values (founding an organisation focused on social betterment), the entrepreneurial RLs have once again looked to who they are and what they value (capabilities) as a means to addressing the inequality they have identified. It is their knowledge, interests, skills and networks that have underpinned the creation of the organisation and its continued growth. The personal terminal values of the entrepreneurial RLs (equality, social recognition) are being achieved through application of their instrumental values (responsibility, capability and imagination) (Rokeach, 1973).

As indicated above, and in the previous sections, it is the RLs personal values that underpin what the organisation does and how it does it and for the entrepreneurial RLs it is their personal values that drive their leadership. This application of personal values (constructed by experience and context) in their approach to responsible leadership was also identifiable within the culture of their

respective organisations and it is this phenomenon that is explored in the next section.

#### **6.2.8 Organisational Culture (The 'How' dimension of Responsible Leadership)**

Of significant interest within the findings was the prevalence and influence of the organisational culture within each of the organisations studied. The RL's personal values that drove the organisational purpose (as explored above) were also the driver for the organisational culture. This culture permeated all of the organisations studied and was a guiding influence on staff and organisational behaviour and was a significant element of how the RLs practiced responsible leadership. This informs the fourth research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension).

##### **6.2.8.1 Cultural Artefacts**

Organisational culture is the set of beliefs, norms and values shared by members of an organisation (Nahavandi et al., 2013). Schein's (1985) work on organisational culture and leadership detailed three levels of organisational culture; artefacts and creations, values and underlying assumptions. The artefacts and creations refer to physical aspects of the workplace and day to day routines that guide people's behaviour. We can see from comments referring to process or norms within the organisations studied that these aspects do give us an insight into the culture of the organisations. E.g. a flat pay structure at Arts for All suggesting egalitarian values, every member of staff being coached at The Stage indicating the value of personal development and every new member of staff attending the five day residential course at The Learning Tree, informing and instilling shared values centred on learning and personal development through experiential learning.

##### **6.2.8.2 Cultural Values**

Schein's analytical structure provides further insight at the second level of organisational values, this is essentially normative and is what the organisational values *ought* to be, as espoused by the leader (Schein, 2010). Within the findings there is a strong congruence between the personal values of the entrepreneurial RLs

and the organisational values. This is exemplified by Richard at Green Partners who sees the furthering of the organisation as his life's work which he will pursue *'until I'm dead'* and who indicates his level of commitment often working without pay *'the business can only afford to pay me 3 or 4 days out of the 5 or 6 I work, but that is OK'*. This has created underlying assumptions in other members of the coop, David comments, *'there are lots of expectations to work overtime without pay and work hard and things can't be afforded. Everyone has bought into the vision of Green Partners and the togetherness and what have you'*. Western (2019) might interpret Richard's leading by example in his working without pay as engineering a culture of control, where employees demonstrations of shared values, devotion and loyalty lead to the benefits of sharing collective values and a sense of community membership. Certainly, when all members of a coop hold equal ownership, where the founder works hard it would be difficult for other partners to not follow suit. This element of control becomes more overt when we read further comment from David implying a manipulative ploy by Richard, *'I mean Richard works much longer hours than anyone else and that is almost like a trump card if you feel you are working too much. And he refers to it saying things like 'I do that for nothing'*.

Martha at The Stage explicitly indicates to new members of staff that they need to share her values, *'If you don't want to love unconditionally, or you can't do this then you will find it very hard to work for us...this is our number one value'*. This aligns closely with Ray's (1986) critical view of corporate culture as a form of manipulation seeking devotion from employees in the form of love for the organisation and its goals. For Bridget at The Learning Tree not only does she require employees to share her values but also customers, she indicates the use of a dynamic web presence to *'ensure they understand the 'Bridget Smith values' before they choose to jump in'*.

#### 6.2.8.3 Cultural Assumptions

Within these comments we can see how closely linked leadership and organisational culture can be, Schein (2004, p. 10) describes them as *'two sides of the same coin'* and later suggests that *'leadership is the management of culture'* (Schein, 2010, p. 125). The findings indicate the dominance of the entrepreneurial RLs personal

values on the organisational culture, they know where they want to go with their organisation and are openly directive in taking it there (Schein, 2010) as exemplified above. In new ventures, this strong leadership of a founder will see the leader being quite comfortable imposing their views on others internally and externally (Donaldson & Lorsch, 1983). When these efforts become successful we hold them up as models of what leadership should be like (Schein, 2010) creating a normative aspect to successful leadership, as implied here by Schein (2010, p. 19) 'all group learning must reflect someone's original beliefs and values - his or her sense of what ought to be'. Within this project that 'someone' is the RL and their espoused normative values. E.g. Bridget comments on why she started The Learning Tree, '*I want every child to understand they are not a victim but they are the power to change the world*', a key driver for Martha was '*I don't believe as a society we give young people enough of a voice and I feel they are the forgotten generation*', Lewis indicates his underlying values '*my time would be better spent doing something that is contributing rather than was perhaps purely self-interest*'. These underpinning beliefs and values are the personal values of the entrepreneurial RLs born of their formative experiences. When these beliefs are attractive to a sufficiently large constituency that leads to success, they become the underlying assumptions of the culture as they are perceived as a 'truth' within the organisation. These truths become assumptions that become 'theories in use' (Argyris & Schon, 1974) that are not deviated from (e.g. an engineer would not intentionally design an unsafe building). Culture at this level is hard to stray from as it will de-stabilise our cognitive and interpersonal world (Schein, 2010). Culture at this level also provides a sense of identity, defines value and supports self-esteem (Hatch & Schultz, 2004), thus to change this would be anxiety provoking. As exemplified by a member of staff at The Stage '*I don't think that there is anywhere else I could ever work*'.

#### 6.2.8.4 Culture and Stakeholders

The leadership approach informed by personal values of the entrepreneurial RLs has formed the culture of each of their organisations'. This initial culture will then be further defined by how the organisational member or employees have adapted to external challenges and developed internal integration (Schein, 2010). Doh and

Quigley (2014) recognise the psychological aspects of culture development within RLs, where they engage with the wider stakeholder community demonstrating trust and that this becomes a virtuous circle that goes on to engender commitment and a level of ownership of the RLs project within the stakeholder group. The application of trust across internal and external stakeholders is also recognised by Maak and Pless (2006b) where they indicate this as a key aspect of the organisational culture established by RLs. Where trust is to be confident in a person's integrity and honesty (Doh & Quigley, 2014) indicating strong moral principles, we can expect to see the RLs prioritising this in their relationships with their stakeholders. Within the findings this is particularly apparent when we consider that shared values lead to trust, this trust being a component of social capital that facilitates group cooperation (Galindo-Pérez-de-Azpillaga, Foronda-Robles, & García-López, 2014). As was apparent in the findings (and discussed further below), the RLs in this project prioritised stakeholders who shared their values, particularly internal stakeholders, where this led to mutual trust between the RL and internal stakeholders this facilitated them being a responsible leader. Responsible leadership is recognised in the literature as 'bringing stakeholders together to pursue a shared and morally sound vision' (Maak & Pless, 2006b, p. 112).

Demonstrated within the findings and above is the dominance of the RLs personal values of equality and social betterment in creating and maintaining their organisation's culture. These personal values have also informed the purpose of the organisation and it is this purpose that serves to direct the activities of their organisation (the 'what' dimension of RL) with the culture concurrently informing the expected behaviours of how this will be achieved (the 'how' dimension of RL). When this is combined with the RLs' application of social and human capital this responds to the research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation. The resulting culture becomes one of being responsible to the beneficiaries of the organisation for improving their lives and it is this focus that is prioritised above all others, including profit or financial surplus (e.g. Martin at The Learning Tree comments '*so we make money but only to make the business functional*').



A further interpretation of this situation comes from Lasch's (2019) work on business models. As explored above the driving force for how the organisation functioned (essentially its business model) was the betterment of the beneficiaries identified as in need. This led to organisation wide responsibility toward the beneficiaries which could be interpreted as a key artefact of the business model within Laash's construct of an actor-network business model. This is particularly apparent when we reflect that employees across the organisations were recruited and sifted against values associated with responsibility toward the beneficiaries and where external stakeholders were also 'vetted' against organisational values (explored further in the following section). This leadership approach and the subsequent informal business model pervaded the organisations at a cultural level, enrolling its actors (e.g. stakeholders and organisational artefacts such as pay structure) into maintaining this responsible approach for the foreseeable future.

However, apparent within the findings there was a dichotomy between the RLs espoused values and their practised values, this was particularly so around staff recruitment and retention and was an influencing factor for the organisational culture, this is explored in the next section.

#### **6.2.9 Organisational Culture and Responsible Leader Values Dichotomies**

As explored within the findings there was a demonstrable intentional application of personal values preferences practised by the RLs (entrepreneurial and mentored) in staff recruitment/selection and retention, positively selecting for those with shared values. Where individuals did not share the personal values of the RL they were not recruited or their exit from the organisation was facilitated where *'they leave quite quickly'* (Wesley from Better Communities). This favouring like-minded others demonstrates a dichotomy between the RLs espoused values of equality and their demonstrable values of favouritism. This could be that values and trust are being applied as a mechanism for control of the organisation as is recognised within the RL literature, where RLs extend trust to those with similar values (as discussed above) (Maak & Pless, 2006b). Or, it is possible that this dichotomy between their espoused and demonstrable values could indicate that their espoused values may not correlate with the most effective organisational performance and in this instance

effective performance is being prioritised above these espoused values (Argyris & Schon, 1974). As a result the RLs may have rationalised their behaviour in that recruiting and retaining link-minded others would improve the effectiveness of the organisation as all staff would be pursuing the same goals with the same value set, which can increase effectiveness (Carton, Murphy, & Clark, 2014; Kotter, 2008a). As a result of this increase in effectiveness there is a greater likelihood of the success of their venture which by extension will improve more beneficiaries lives'. Thus, the behaviour may seem incongruent with the espoused RL values but in reality it could be the focus on terminal values of helping as many beneficiaries as possible (wholly congruent with the espoused values) that is informing the RLs preferences around recruitment and retention. Therefore, the inequality of an application of personal preference in recruitment (a behaviour informed by their instrumental values) becomes a justifiable violation of their espoused values as it is assumed this will lead to the greater good, presenting a utilitarian philosophical approach. Argyris and Schon (1974) recommend caution where this occurs as there is potential for selective inattention to the behaviour that is creating the dichotomy and for this behaviour to increase where it has met with apparent success. Where an increase in dichotomous behaviour occurs, group members ultimately become sensitised to the inconsistency of the espoused and demonstrable values eventually leading to the group's demise (Argyris & Schon, 1974). For the RLs in this study, it would seem that this level of intolerance has not surfaced when it comes to the favouritism applied in recruitment.

If we analyse this dichotomy from Schein's value survey, the RLs could be employing their self-interested values of seeing their organisation succeed through increasing its effectiveness, whilst compromising those mutually exclusive values of equality (universalism), which - if expressed in staff recruitment - may see increased levels of disruption as a result of a more heterogeneous staff team (Amabile, 1998) which may lead to a dilution of the established culture (Schein, 2010) leading to limited performance (Kotter, 2008a). It is recognised within the RL literature that there is a challenge of mutually exclusive needs within RLs stakeholder communities and deciding who's needs to prioritise being a necessary RL skill set, including the self-interest needs of the RL themselves (Pless et al., 2012; Voegtlin et al., 2012).

Beyond this, it is possible that more generic personal preferences could be in play such as 'similar to me' (Nahavandi et al., 2013), this is described as a perceptual preference that can occur during recruitment and retention where we develop a liking for a person who we perceive as similar to us and dislike for those different. This can be an automatic or subconscious response and is hard to avoid (Pulakos & Wexley, 1983). However, here the preference is explicit and intentional so it seems less likely to be a perceptual preference and more likely linked with organisation performance and success.

It would seem from this analysis that the intentional preference for like-minded others in recruitment is to increase the overall effectiveness of the organisation and that it is acceptable to the RLs to compromise their values of equality to achieve this, or that they have become selectively inattentive to this act (Argyris & Schon, 1974). As indicated by Ciulla (2005), moral leaders rarely do the right thing the right way for the right reasons, and often compromise on one of the three. The RLs in this study could be seen to be doing the right thing for the right reasons but perhaps compromising on the right way when it comes to staff recruitment and retention (e.g. not applying equal opportunities recruitment practices). Conversely it is perhaps utopian to believe that we will never express a preference, and the expressing of preferences is always going to lead to the favouring of some parties over others.

This approach however is at odds with the RL literature that cites 'creating a culture of inclusion' as a key attribute of a RL (Pless & Maak, 2004, p. 132). Although there was no significant investigation into equal opportunities practices within the participant's organisations it was apparent that exiting 'undesirable' staff, or selecting like-minded ones, was informal. Wesley implies this approach at Better Communities *'if you have a member of staff that doesn't want to work with people they are very quickly.... They leave quite quickly, they are not pushed out but they realise quite quickly that this is not for them'*. Bridget also indicates informal approaches, such as *'I put barriers in the way of those that are not aligned with the values'* which could be interpreted as bullying or oppressive behaviour.

The values dichotomy found in staff recruitment was intensified by two of the entrepreneurial RLs Lewis and Richard. Both have strong moral values, are self-

confident, wish to influence and are trusted by their colleagues, all characteristics of a charismatic leader (House, 1976). Where charismatic leaders emphasise the intrinsic rewards of work over the extrinsic (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) this would describe their leadership approach (e.g. Lewis and equal pay, Richard and shared ownership). However, they also espoused values of shared leadership but in practice were the dominant leader. Richard at Green Partners was the self-labelled '*strategic lead*' of a member coop (a contradiction of coop principles) and Lewis at Arts for All indicated all staff as having '*equal agency*' whilst simultaneously indicating he '*resists*' the expressed wishes of staff members (as explored in the findings chapters).

Of course, leadership is sometimes about making unpopular decisions for strategic reasons. However, as was explored in the findings chapters it would appear any significant employee 'dissent' at Arts for All is mitigated via recruitment of like-minded others and where disagreement may occur (e.g. more junior staff members indicating their disagreement with a flat pay structure) these views may be dismissed if the management team deem so. Thus we can conclude that although equal agency is ostensibly valued across all staff at Arts for All this has limits. As was the case for Richard at Green Partners in his functional role as strategic lead of a partner owned cooperative, contradicting the fundamental principles of a cooperative.

The dichotomy findings discussed above only became apparent at the analysis stage of this project, as a result they were not explored in more detail within the scope of the interviews. However, if the RLs within the project increase this practice it is possible they will see an increase in staff turnover or will adjust their recruitment practice to mitigate the side effects of their values preferences (Argyris and Schon 1974). In addition to this, as the RLs are choosing to build homogeneous teams within their organisations, this too comes at a cost. Teams of like-minded individuals tend to think and act in similar ways and as a result often lack creativity and innovative thinking (Amabile, 1998), there tends to be limited conflict which has the result of reducing quality decision making (Nahavandi et al., 2013). The resulting lack of diversity also limits capacity in looking at challenges from a broad range of perspectives which can lead to new insights, as well as failing to demonstrate the values the RLs organisations are espousing, such as inclusivity (Pless & Maak, 2004).

However, staff retention is predicted to be higher within homogeneous teams (Jackson et al., 1991) which is demonstrable within the findings.

Consequently the excluding of those with values not aligned with the RL's and the subsequent recruitment of like-minded others has positives and negatives and the RLs behaviour would indicate they see the positives as outweighing the negatives. When it comes to staff retention it would seem that they are correct and that the values dichotomy demonstrated around recruitment is tolerated by staff and is not increasing staff turnover. Although it is possible that this is countered by the homogeneity of the group which can reduce staff turnover (Jackson et al., 1991). The application of this personal preference was a conscious and open act of the RLs, however it is likely that a level of selective inattention (Argyris & Schon, 1974) is present (where they are choosing not to engage at a deep cognitive level with the ethical principles of this unequal practice) as there was no evidence to suggest the RLs felt a need to justify or rationalise the dichotomy in any way. This approach of the RLs studied challenges the current literature on responsible leadership around stakeholder inclusivity, where RLs are seen as inclusive networkers keen to engage the full range of stakeholders regardless of values preference (Maak & Pless 2006b). This key finding informs the fourth research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation .

#### **6.2.10 Mentored Responsible Leaders Organisational Culture**

As discussed previously the two mentored RLs in the project held similar values to their mentor when recruited and went on to fine tune their values fully adopting the values of their mentor. Here Peter at Enable comments on his mentor initiating his organisation and his adoption of those values, *'Phil who started the whole thing off he did have a burning desire to do good in the world. So now they are my values'*. Wesley comments on his personal values development in relation to his professional life *'One is down to my boss Carl and his support as a person'*. Implicit here is that both of the mentored RLs have taken a significant lead from their mentor in developing their value set.

Also, of relevance here is organisational purpose, as discussed above for the mentored RLs this was devised by their mentor who also identified the associated

beneficiaries. Thus, for the mentored RLs the purpose of the organisation and the beneficiary focus are both the realisation of their mentors' vision. In addition, the personal values of the mentored RLs have also been significantly influenced by their mentor's ideology. The combination of purpose, beneficiary group and personal values are the building blocks of the organisational culture of the mentored RLs organisations' (Schein, 2010). From this we can see that it is the RLs mentor's influence and vision that has guided the initial culture of the organisation.

Commentary from the findings also indicates that this has not been further evolved or developed by the mentored RLs. Peter indicates consistency of the purpose of Enable from its original inception as a social enterprise to provide employment to marginalised individuals and that this has not changed. Further to this a Board member at Enable recognises that Peter is maintaining the status quo and not looking to develop or change the organisation.

Wesley indicates the mission statement, derived by his CEO and mentor as the organisation purpose, this mission statement documentation also defines the beneficiary community and it is this document he cites as guiding his activities. Consequently, it is apparent that the organisational culture of both organisations' was created by the mentored RLs mentor and they are maintaining this in line with that original vision and approach.

This recognition that the mentored RLs are maintaining the established culture once again implicates them as being followers to their mentors. This realisation leads us to a further insight when we reflect back to the entrepreneurial RLs approach to recruitment, where they actively recruit, retain and reward like-minded employees. It is entirely possible that the mentors of the mentored RLs are themselves Responsible Leaders and have actively recruited staff whose values are aligned with theirs, in this case Peter and Wesley (the mentored RLs). They have then gone on to mentor them, fine tuning their personal values and instilling a specific cultural approach to leading and managing the organisation or department that Peter and Wesley run. With the original purpose, beneficiaries and culture still in effect within the mentored RLs sphere of influence we can assert that they are still following their mentor's original vision and they have effectively been recruited as a responsible manager by their mentor, a responsible leader in their own right.

Reflecting on the analysis of the two types of RL in this project (entrepreneurial and mentored) we can begin to delineate responsible leadership (entrepreneurial RLs) from responsible management (mentored RLs). A review and mapping of the findings indicates clear distinctions in functionality of the two types, as detailed below in table 6.4 below.

**Table 6-4 Responsible Leader/Manager Functions**

<b>Function of coming to and being a:</b>	<b>Responsible Leader</b>	<b>Responsible Manager</b>
Is influenced toward Responsibility during formative years experiences	✓	✓
Formative years experiences linked to organisations creation and its service	✓	
Establishes an organisation	✓	
Sets the organisational vision	✓	
Defines the organisation purpose and end users (beneficiaries)	✓	
Application of human and social capital in creation of organisations service offering	✓	
Establishes the organisational culture	✓	
Demonstrates a broad range of personal values (including entrepreneurially associated ones)	✓	
Is recruited into post		✓
Follows an established purpose and culture		✓
Have been (is still) mentored		✓
Alignment between personal values and organisational values	✓	✓
Recruits and retains like-minded others	✓	✓
Maintains the organisational culture (community of shared moral purpose)	✓	✓
Influencing others and directing employee activity	✓	✓
Networking and building social capital	✓	✓
Business and operational planning	✓	✓
Delivers outcomes in line with organisation purpose and vision	✓	✓

Apparent within table 6.4 is that the mentored RLs/responsible managers are demonstrating functions associated with management e.g. planning, organising, achieving outcomes, and directing resources (including staff) (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) . Whereas the entrepreneurial RLs are doing much of the same management

activity and are also going beyond this in performing leadership functions e.g. setting the vision, influencing through culture creation (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) and motivating (Kotter, 2008a).

Also of significance here is that the responsible managers have been recruited and mentored into post and thus are firmly followers during this period. Whereas the RLs have at no time indicated any aspect of following others within the findings. However important to recognise is that this is part of the story for the mentored RLs/responsible managers and going forward it is entirely possible that they will develop their leadership capabilities and evolve into a leader and mentor of others.

This re-interpretation of the mentored RLs as Responsible Managers Provides a further 'lens' from which to understand the journey of participants in this study. However, this further distinction also creates complexities within the nomenclature of the participants, this is clarified in the table below:

**Table 6-5 Participant Role Nomenclature**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Interpreted role(s)</b>
Bridget	Responsible Leader Entrepreneurial Responsible Leader
Lewis	Responsible Leader Entrepreneurial Responsible Leader
Will	Responsible Leader Entrepreneurial Responsible Leader
Martha	Responsible Leader Entrepreneurial Responsible Leader
Richard	Responsible Leader Entrepreneurial Responsible Leader
Peter	Responsible Leader Mentored Responsible Leader Responsible Manager
Wesley	Responsible Leader Mentored Responsible Leader Responsible Manager



### 6.2.11 Organisational Culture Conclusions

The culture of all seven of the organisations studied was wholly aligned with the personal values of the RL. These were the same personal values that informed the creation and purpose of the organisation. The entrepreneurial RLs' personal values informed the original development of their organisational culture, the mentored RLs' (already holding closely aligned personal values) adopted the culture established by their mentor. The culture and personal RL values alignment was supported by clear evidence e.g. artefacts such as demonstrating value in staff through equal pay (even when others suggest meritocracy as more appropriate – perhaps further demonstrating Lewis's communitarian philosophy) , personal coaching and training. There was also an openly dominant (Donaldson & Lorsch, 1983) approach to recruiting staff with shared values leading to the creation of a stakeholder community with shared moral purpose, an identified approach to responsible leadership (Maak & Pless, 2006b) and one that would ensure the perpetuity of the established culture. With the success of the organisation seen as a measure of effectiveness of the leader (Schein, 2010) the RLs established culture and leadership approach has become normative, further instilling the established culture.

The apparent dichotomy between espoused and demonstrable values within the RLs recruitment practices (selecting those with shared values) was not openly challenged or recognised as dichotomous within the participant interviews. It is likely this was an acceptable practice where the focus was on the creation of a shared values community that would lead to potential gains in effectiveness which would ultimately lead to improved organisational performance (Kotter, 2008a) improving more beneficiaries' lives. Although important to remember is that diversity is also recognised as a mechanism for improved organisation performance (Amabile, 1998; Doh & Quigley, 2014). Thus for the RLs the ends justify the means, effectively prioritising their terminal values above their instrumental values (Rokeach, 1973).

The recruitment of like-minded others by responsible leaders suggests they are recruiting *responsible* staff, where *responsible* here is akin to the responsible of RL (e.g. responsible to the wider stakeholder community and applying moral decision making). The evidence suggests that for the mentored RLs (aka Responsible

Managers) it is they who have been recruited by a RL (their mentor) and that they are the responsible staff member in the position of Responsible Manager. Thus we can conclude that RLs do build a stakeholder community of shared moral purpose (Maak & Pless, 2006b) and as a result are not inclusive of those who do not share this purpose as the two (to them) are mutually exclusive. However this does lead to a prevalent organisational culture of shared moral purpose centred on the capabilities of the respective RL which brings both benefits and costs in organisational effectiveness. The establishment and maintenance of the organisational culture is a key facet of how RLs lead their organisation. These conclusions together inform the fourth research objective: Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation (the how dimension).

### **6.3 Interpretation of Findings - Conclusions**

The discussion in the sections above has shown that the RLs experiences in their formative years have gone on to dominate their professional lives. Certainly for the five entrepreneurial RLs (perhaps the definitive RLs in the study) this is particularly apparent with them citing specific instances in their early lives that have led them to want to influence change in the world, so as to improve the lives of others whom they have become sensitised toward. It is these experiences that have informed their values that in turn have led them to action in creating an organisation that is at some level addressing inequalities or suffering in others. These others (or beneficiaries) are linked to the personal formative experiences of the RL and it is these people they are seeking to help. In creating and building their organisations the RLs have looked to their own experiences and capabilities when developing their organisational service provision, this too being linked to their personal values. In recruiting staff they have selected for like-minded others and built a community who prioritise the beneficiaries' needs above other aspects such as monetary gain and equality in recruitment. This has built a culture of shared moral purpose that is linked directly to the personal values of the RLs, the same values that were influential in leading the RL to action in the first instance.

Within the scope of this study the findings suggest a process of responsible leadership, responding to the central research question: 'What is Responsible Leadership in practice?' This is detailed in the following chapter.

## **7 Contribution and Reflection**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Having explicated the findings in the previous chapter, this chapter will present the theory of Responsible Leadership developed from the findings and will demonstrate how the projects' aims and objectives have been met. It will postulate the knowledge contribution to the extant literature on responsible leadership and will also review the strengths and limitations of the research whilst suggesting future research areas. This chapter's final section details the personal reflections of the researcher on undertaking the development of this thesis.

### **7.2 Representative model of Responsible Leadership**

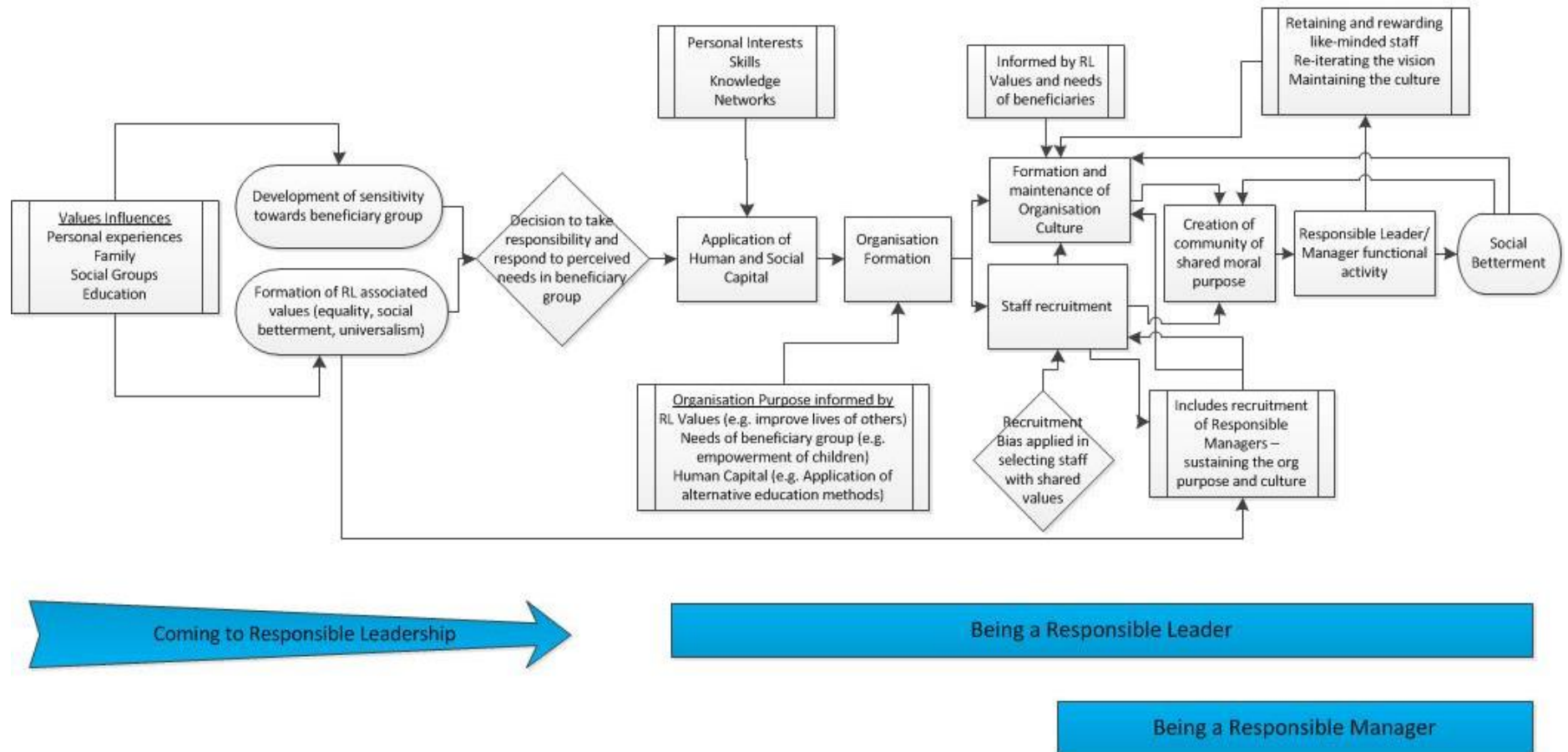
Within the scope of this study the findings suggest a process of responsible leadership, responding to the central research question: 'What is Responsible Leadership in practice?' Detailed below in figure 7.1 is a visual depiction of the process of responsible leadership as explored and analysed within this thesis. The process as a whole constitutes a model or theory of RL for those RLs studied. The model captures the responsible leader journeys of the five entrepreneurial RLs and also incorporates the mentored RLs as Responsible Managers, who are recruited as managers and go on to maintain the organisation's purpose and culture.

Clearly depicted in the model is the influence of the early experiences of all of the RLs in developing personal values that are associated with responsible leadership. For the entrepreneurial RLs this is the beginning of their journey of responsible leadership. It is these personal values that influence all aspects of their decision making from the initial decision to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, through to staff recruitment, organisational culture formation, day to day leadership and the achievement of the social betterment aims of their organisation.

Having a direction and focus on social betterment the RLs then look to themselves and their interests, skills, networks and knowledge in developing a

service provision that will be the fundamental activity of their organisation and will lead to improving the lives of others. Thus the aim of the organisation is informed by the RLs terminal values whilst the service provision is informed by their instrumental values. The organisational vision of social betterment becomes the driver for all aspects of organisational activity including recruitment where the RL will recruit others who share and value this vision and the desire to improve the lives of the beneficiaries. This shared values system born of the RLs personal values will create the original organisational culture that will inform decision making across the organisation. This becomes the dominant narrative for the day to day activities of all staff and the RL where they may further recognise and celebrate those who exemplify the culture and values of the organisation. This leads to the achievement (in part or whole) of the social betterment aspirations of the organisation which becomes a demonstrable ratification of the RLs approach which further bolsters the existing organisational culture and recognition of the RLs approach as normative.

Figure 7-1 The Process of Responsible Leadership



### 7.3 Achieving the Research Aims and Objectives

This process of responsible leadership as depicted above and explored within the previous chapter answers the central research question of this thesis: What is Responsible Leadership in practice? It also provides a response to the research aim, which was to: explore the dimensions of responsible leadership as a form of leadership. The stated dimensions were those addressing the cited knowledge gaps within the extant literature, namely 'What' are RLs responsible for and 'Who' do they see themselves as being responsible to (Maak & Pless, 2006b; Pless & Maak, 2011; Waldman, 2011a). This was further enhanced through exploration of 'How' RLs lead responsibly and 'Why' they have become RLs. These four dimensions were extrapolated into research objectives and are detailed in table 7.2 below along with a summary of the related findings discussed in chapter six.

**Table 7-2 Research Objectives and Summary of Findings**

<b>RL Dimension</b>	<b>Research Objective</b>	<b>Conclusive Findings</b>
Why	Explore the motivation, antecedents or drivers that lead to responsible leadership	RLs formative year's experiences including family and social life led them to develop virtuous personal values that are associated with responsible leadership. This value formation was such that it led them to direct action in responding to a perceived need(s) in society that would address inequality or suffering.
Who	Explore who RLs feel they are responsible for	The formative year's experiences of the RLs that led them to become a responsible leader were linked with a group exposed to suffering or inequality. It is this group (directly or indirectly) that the RLs have empathised with and are intent on

		supporting in some way.
What	Explore what RLs see themselves as being 'responsible' for	The RLs have created a service that will add value to the lives of those who utilise it. This service function is the main activity of the organisation and when coupled with the focus of the beneficiary group becomes the organisational purpose. The service function developed by the RLs is born of their human and social capital and informed by their instrumental values.
How	Identify how responsible leaders engage with and lead their organisation	Creating a clear vision and values for the organisation the RLs actively seek those that already align with this vision and share these values. This value set and the prioritising of the beneficiary needs coupled with the service provision inform the organisational culture. It is this culture and beneficiary focus that directs staff decision making and activity.



## 7.4 Contribution to Knowledge

As demonstrated in chapter one the world is changing, with leaders demonstrating irresponsible leadership born of self-interest that is morally and ethically questionable (Sachs, 2011; Voegtlin, 2011) and has led to wide ranging negative impacts on society (Doh & Stumpf, 2005b; Pless & Maak, 2011; Sachs, 2011). The resulting social and economic instabilities require a deeper understanding of alternative approaches to leadership, approaches that are responsible and move beyond self-interest to encompass the concerns of the wider stakeholder community (Chin et al., 2013; Maak & Pless, 2009; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). The output of this thesis addresses this need insofar as it makes a significant and necessary contribution to the field of Responsible Leadership.

I argue that my analysis of RL is original as no prior study has explored RL as a process, determining the antecedents that create a RL through to understanding how RLs express this in their leadership practice and approach. The outcomes of this focus have facilitated a deeper understanding of RL at a holistic level whilst also furthering the knowledge base of specific elements of this approach to leadership. It has also responded to cited knowledge gaps within the extant literature and created further insight into areas of disparity within the literature.

As indicated, an originality of this thesis resides on elucidating on the process and systemic characteristics of coming to and being a Responsible Leader (as detailed in figure 7.1). Multi-actor dynamic networks can be interpreted and analysed as processes and can reveal networks of processes as multi-level and multi-actor phenomena (Makkonen, Aarikka-Stenroos, & Olkkonen 2012) as is the case within this study. This novel approach in the study of RL has facilitated the development of the process of RL (Fig 7.1) and has done so by pulling together a range of areas of RL study (e.g. antecedence, values, stakeholder theory) previously analysed in a much more 'siloes' approach. This process view or horizontal approach to this study (rather than vertical 'drilling down') has not only enabled the development of the process of RL but has also created the opportunity to further this approach where additional exploration into specific aspects of the process will likely reveal even deeper insights. Indeed, when sharing the findings with the RL participants, particularly the process model of RL, a RL participant enquired about continuing the research to deeper levels

so as to 'flesh out' aspects of the process and suggested himself as the key participant to support this.

This process theory furthers the current interpretations of Responsible Leadership which are currently debated upon with the literature (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Miska et al., 2014; Pless & Maak, 2011; Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). Within the scope of this study the findings clearly indicate that RLs are those amongst us who feel compelled to respond (directly and/or indirectly) to their perceived need in others and that this sensitivity toward these others is born of their exposure to them, or their situation, during their formative years. It is during these formative years that the RLs have formed a value set (Bobowik et al., 2011; Gilligan, 1982) that is virtuous and aligned with the self-transcendent values of a RL, whilst simultaneously being sensitised to the plight of a beneficiary group (Ketola, 2012). For the entrepreneurial RLs in this study (perhaps the definitive RLs rather than the mentored RLs (aka Responsible Managers)) this was a clarion call that would become their vocation and for some will remain so for life.

My findings go beyond that which is detailed in the existing literature, including Freeman and Auster's (2011) concept paper on 'RL Values and Authenticity' which suggests that early life experiences and our reflections of these are a composite of the creation of a RL. Crilly et al (2008) indicate the presence of self-transcendent values as a determiner of RL behaviours, as do Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014) although they would suggest this is only so in combination with a range of external influences. Beyond this, studies such as Pless's (2007) RL case study of Anita Roddick, where she (Roddick) cites many formative years experiences (e.g. global travelling/backpacking and working in a kibbutz) as instrumental in forming her leadership approach to business. My study takes a different approach in that the findings are an interpretation of the descriptions of the behaviours of the RLs by themselves and their stakeholders. This view indicates what is actually happening/happened and is being witnessed by those involved. According to Rokeach (1973) behaviours are the most accurate indicator of underlying values. Therefore this study builds on the previous work in two aspects, one in that it is studying behaviours (a more accurate indicator of personal values) and secondly it is also looking to identify thematic trends across a group of RLs rather than a single case

study, open questionnaire or concept paper. In a small qualitative study identified themes may not be generalisable; however with all of the participant RLs in this study indicating their formative year's experiences as the driver for their coming to RL, this indicates a clear behavioural trend that deepens the knowledge base of responsible leadership beyond that which is already known. There is also a suggestion within the data that the level of response a RL makes is linked to their level of exposure to suffering or inequality (that which led to their activation) and that the two may be proportionate, however the data set here is limited and thus the findings inconclusive but give a clear avenue of exploration for further research.

The mechanism of a RLs resourcefulness in creating and running their organisations is not significantly commented upon in the RL literature. Recognising this gap there is an explicit call by Doh and Quigley (2014, p. 259) for further investigation here, 'the literature to date has not fully specified the pathways through which responsible leaders exert their unique abilities to influence organizational processes and outcomes'. The scope of this study was to investigate responsible leadership in practice and thus has a focus on the process of RL for the reasons cited in the introduction and methodology chapters. A constituent part of this process is 'what' the RLs undertake to do as a systematic part of the holistic process of social betterment, or 'being' a RL. The need for exploration of the 'what' of RL is further indicated within the RL literature (Maak & Pless, 2006a; Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman & Siegel, 2008) where there is currently no agreed upon interpretation and thus still limited agreement on a shared interpretation of RL. The findings in this thesis inform this gap within the current literature where the theme of the RLs utilising their human capital (an instrumental value of capability (Rokeach, 1973)) as the source for the organisation's service offering was consistent across all five entrepreneurial RLs in the study. It is important to highlight here that using one's human capital to start up an enterprise is in itself not unusual practice for entrepreneurs (Wickham 2006). However my interpretation here was that this application of the RLs human capital was intrinsically linked to their instrumental values, insofar as they were providing to their beneficiaries that which they themselves perceived as being of value. They do this in the belief that it will lead to the realisation of the beneficiaries' terminal values (e.g. happiness, equality, freedom,

self-respect) as this is what has occurred within the RL. With this we can conclude from previous analysis that the internalised aspects of the RL's terminal values are defining the purpose of the organisation, insofar as what it is aiming to achieve, whilst the mechanism to achieving this is supported by the more malleable aspects of their human capital (and instrumental values), those that can be learned and developed (knowledge and skills) and readily transferred to beneficiaries. Clearly implicating the personal values of the RL as the key driver for what the organisation does (driven by RLs instrumental values) and why it does it (driven by RL terminal values).

A further and significant contribution to the current knowledge base on responsible leadership was the discovery of principles in play around stakeholder exclusion. As was explored in the previous chapter the influence of the RLs values (driven by a commitment to social betterment) was not only the guiding principle behind what the organisation does and why it does it, but also determined the boundary of stakeholder inclusion. The RLs were actively excluding certain stakeholders (e.g. employee applicants and potential customers) from engaging with the organisation where they did not believe them to hold the 'right' personal value set, as defined by that RL. This finding was significant and a stark contradiction of the current literature where RLs are seen to be wholly inclusive of the broader stakeholder community (Maak and Pless, 2006; Doh & Quigley, 2014). Perhaps most surprising of all here was that there was no evidence suggesting this practice of exclusivity was not seen as unjust, nor was it challenged at any level by any participants in this study and was openly accepted by all, indicating acceptable common practice. Manifestly at odds with the current interpretations of RLs this new finding is worthy of significant further investigation. As discussed in the previous chapter this exclusivity was largely exercised through staff recruitment and this exclusive practice had implications for organisational culture which is further detailed below.

I identified within this study that RLs create a strong culture focused on the organisational purpose (itself driven by the RL terminal values). Although this is a well-recognised phenomenon in the leadership literature (Schein, 2010) and also the RL literature, where RLs are seen to create a culture of shared moral purpose (Maak & Pless, 2006b), my findings go beyond this and clearly indicate that RLs are creating a

culture of exclusivity through the application of a personal preference in staff recruitment and retention, where they select for individuals with shared values. This approach and clear application of personal preferences in selecting like-minded others challenges the current literature as discussed above. Although the challenge of prioritising mutually exclusive needs across stakeholders is recognised as a necessary skill set for RLs (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Pless et al., 2012) it is not explicated beyond a suggestion that it may be linked to the responsibility orientations of the RL in question (Pless et al., 2012).

Within the scope of this study, it would seem that the reasoning for this seemingly hypocritical approach is the rationalising by the RL of mutually exclusive values. Where the virtuous values of higher moral purpose are sought in employees, it is the view of the RL that if these values are not prevalent then other mutually exclusive values are being prioritised and are likely incompatible with the demands placed upon staff (e.g. employees need to work hard to benefit others not to earn lots of money). Thus RLs are actively selecting for like-minded others when recruiting, demonstrating that RLs actively seek responsible followers (including responsible managers) to join them on their mission to improve the lives of others and society. This approach is supported in-part within the literature where values of self-interest and universalism are recognised as mutually exclusive (Schwartz, 1996) and shared values can lead to improved organisational performance (Kotter, 2008a). With such a demonstrably clear trend across all seven RL participants and supported by their stakeholder participants, I argue that this is a significant contribution to the RL knowledge base, contributing both to the overall aim of this thesis in developing an understanding of the process of RL and also furthering the interpretations of responsible leadership.

A further contribution from this project was the delineation of responsible leader and responsible manager functions, as was mapped from the findings in the previous chapter (Table 6.5). This particular finding was not implicated by the aims and objectives of this thesis and emerged as a theme from the data during analysis. On identifying all participants for this project there was no indication that their roles were structurally different from each other (e.g. Peter (now identified as a Responsible Manager) held the title of CEO as did several of the RLs) also during the

interviews this theme was not apparent. However, under the scrutiny of analysis where the data itself drove the theme development this distinction between responsible leader and responsible manager soon become apparent. This finding clearly indicates responsible managers (mentored RLs) as followers who have not initiated the organisation and the vision for social betterment but are empathetic to the associated values and aspiration for social betterment. Entrepreneurial RLs, however, have demonstrated their capability of establishing the organisation and driving it forward in-line with their aspirations for social betterment, setting the vision and culture and influencing others to help make this a reality. The entrepreneurial RLs also engage in management functions in order to maintain the organisation, much the same as the responsible managers (RM), however this is self-directed and not in response to another's direction/guidance. Much of this separation of the two roles is similar to that reported in the leadership and management literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 2008b; Northouse, 2015). However, what is not indicated in the wider literature is the significant alignment of values of RL and RM and how this influences the leadership and management functions. The alignment is a likely result of the application of personal preferences in recruitment practices of RLs as discussed above, the result of this is that the RM becomes a proxy for the RL in continuing their mission for social betterment and that the RLs approach to leadership becomes the template for the RM in their running the organisation or department; a manifestation of cultural influence (Donaldson & Lorsch, 1983; Schein, 2010). This is exemplified in the recruitment practices of both RLs and RMs where both openly apply a personal preference that is inconsistent with their espoused values of inclusivity. Both are also firmly driven by the plight of others and it is this shared value of universalism (Schwartz, 1996) that guides their decision making within their management function. Thus, the RM perpetuates the organisational vision and purpose that was established by the RL.

The determining of a process of RL was implicit within the central research question of this thesis 'What is Responsible Leadership in practice' and is also called for within the RL literature (Doh & Quigley, 2014, p. 270) 'We encourage future scholarship in this area to focus on process issues'. With the data collected and analysed it has been possible to build a model (Figure 7.1) that reflects the process of

responsible leadership for the RLs in this project (recognising the mentored RLs as being more closely aligned with responsible management) as detailed above. This model or process was present across all of the five entrepreneurial RLs in the study and although not empirically generalisable due to the approach of the study, it does present empirical evidence that adds to the interpretations of RLs. However, as this process of responsible leadership was consistent across all RLs in the study it is theoretically generalisable and presents a robust framework from which to further investigate the practice and implications of responsible leadership.

The investigation that led to this thesis was arrived at in part as a response to the status of the current literature, particularly a recognition of the need to deepen the understanding of what RLs were responsible for and to whom they were responsible to (Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). This led to the creation of the four research objectives, simplified as the why, what, who and how of RL. Within the context of this study these four objectives have been addressed as detailed above and earlier in the previous chapter. Figure 7.2 details how RLs in this study were primarily responsible to the beneficiaries identified within their organisational purpose and were concerned for the wider stakeholder community where values were shared. The beneficiary group (e.g. children suffering abuse, marginalised communities, people with disabilities) were identified in their formative years as people in need, with the future RL becoming sensitised to this need and being of a disposition that would lead them to action in later life. Responding to this need and improving the lives of those they had become sensitised toward was at the heart of what the RLs felt responsible for and it is this that would go on to inform the creation of their organisational purpose. Within this project it is apparent that the 'Who' of RL are the beneficiaries cited in the organisation purpose and the 'What' of RL is the service provision (driven by the RLs instrumental values) that improves, emancipates or enables the lives of those identified. This provides an original contribution to the RL knowledge base in that the context of this research project is unique and it also provides a descriptive account of the views of both RLs and their stakeholders indicating clear answers to the questions in the RL literature, 'who is responsible for what and toward whom?' (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p. 2; Waldman & Siegel, 2008)

A further theoretical contribution within this thesis is the review of the traditional ethical philosophies through the lens of responsible leadership (as detailed in section 1.1) giving an original interpretation of RL within the historical context of ethics and economics. Much of the contemporary writing on RL assumes a great deal and does not consider fundamental issues such as the key principles within Hobbs (2006)[1844] allegory of leadership where ALL leadership is implicitly responsible to (and thus answerable to) the followers who created it. It is perhaps a myopic view that holds us in the 'here and now' where we forget or do not consider the lessons of old, such as the Aristotelian view of politics and economics being the same field of study where profit was a questionable principle. Sen (1999) suggests we have interpreted some key tenants of economics too narrowly and allowed the market to take care of itself and not considered the wider needs of the whole community. Capitalism is seen as a functional economic system guided by 'the invisible hand' (Smith 2010)[1759], however it often fails to consider those in the margins of society (Harvey, 2011) and as we have seen across this thesis in the practice of RL, pure profit seeking is not the only mechanism for a purposeful life that contributes to society. Indeed if we were to look to Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' he indicates, 'to the interests of this great community he (sic) ought at all times be willing that his own little interests should be sacrificed' (Sen, 1999 p.23) surely this sentiment reflects the practice of RL rather than the questionable choices (e.g. Nike's sweat shops) made by highly profitable multinationals guided by the 'invisible hand'. The RL practices and successes highlighted in this thesis give clear indication that capitalist societies should reflect on the original tenants of economics and consider them more widely in the context of modern society if we are all to benefit from progress.

#### **7.4.1 Contribution Summary**

Detailed below is an overview of the key contributions of this thesis:

- A process theory of responsible leadership
- Findings indicating the antecedents that leads to individuals becoming responsible leaders
- A theory that differentiates responsible leaders from responsible managers



- How a RLs personal value set drives multiple aspects of their organisation including:
  - The aims/purpose of the organisation (why it exists) which is informed by the RLs internalised terminal values of social betterment
  - The nature of the organisation's service provision (what it does) which is informed by the RL instrumental values
  - The beneficiaries (who the RL is responsible to) and boundary of stakeholder inclusion (who the RL is not responsible to) informed by the RL terminal values
  - The creation and maintenance of a culture of social betterment that drives organisational performance (how RLs lead), primarily facilitated by the recruitment of like-minded others and exclusion of those whose values do not align (presenting as a dichotomy where RLs espouse values of inclusivity)

## 7.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

The strength of this research lays in its furthering of the understanding and definition of a nascent and necessary area of research; Responsible Leadership. Through the deconstruction, analysis and interpretation of the data it was possible to identify themes that gave insight into why some leaders choose to be RLs and how the practice of responsible leadership manifests within the identified stakeholder community.

As a significant amount of the data collected was from the RLs being studied or stakeholders identified by them, this could lead to an overly positive view of the RL and their behaviours. However, when we consider that the purpose of this study was to further the understanding of responsible leadership (itself a positive leadership approach), it is identifying and analysing these positive and responsible views, behaviours and relationships that gives strength and uniqueness to this study, whilst creating the necessary focus on the subject area of investigation. It was the initial RL interview that developed understanding and familiarity (for me as the researcher) for each RL and their organisation, this then facilitated a richer and more informed

interview with the RL stakeholders. Without understanding the closeness of these relationships some of the data/interpretations may have been lost.

A possible limitation to the study was its size in that only seven RLs and their stakeholders were included. However, as the interviews and analysis occurred concurrently within the project, it became apparent that certain themes were repeating themselves and were forming specific findings. There was (and still is) scope to further the study. However, myself and my supervisors (following discussions), determined that the data collected was sufficient to evidence those themes that were apparent and that further investigation along similar lines was unlikely to produce new themes or significant findings.

A further limitation is that the findings within this project cannot be empirically generalised. However, as a qualitative study this does identify themes that may well be transferrable to other situations (Bryman & Bell, 2015) and can inform both leadership researchers and practitioners. The findings resonate with much of the existing literature suggesting a level of consistency with current knowledge and provide a new perspective on this, furthering the knowledge base and providing a limited claim to a theoretical generalisation.

As the aim of this research was to investigate RL as a process, this required a scope that may be broader than many doctoral theses, as it was exploring the RL journey across a range of functions, activities and experiences. However, it is this holistic exploration of RL that is called for within the extant literature and thus is a strength of this approach (Greige-Frangieh & Khayr-Yaacoub, 2017). As a result, this thesis touches on a range of areas, each of which being open to yet further study to deepen understanding (e.g. Antecedents to RL, leadership culture, application of personal preference in recruitment). However, the depth of study taken across the constituent elements of coming to and being a RL was sufficient to determine a response to the research question; What is responsible leadership in practice?

## **7.6 Future Research**

The findings within this research have opened up several lines of enquiry worthy of further investigation. Certainly, a furthering of the understanding of the antecedents to RL and exploring the idea that the level of exposure to hardship is linked to the

level of drive behind a person coming to and being a RL would be enlightening and has implications for RL/RM education and practice.

The unanticipated findings of RLs openly applying personal preferences in recruitment and retention practices was well explored here but still warrants further investigation due to its contradictory notion within the construct of what it is to be a RL. Also, the prevalence of very strong cultures within some of the organisations studied (some akin to a cult) was significant and deepening the understanding of this and the subsequent outcomes would extend the understanding of responsible leadership and its interpretations.

A fundamental approach within this study was to discern a process of RL and within the scope of this project this has been achieved. However, this particularly avenue of enquiry has much scope for further investigation. This could include exploring in great depth the constituent elements of the process (e.g. antecedence, values application, exclusivity practices) and/or also using the process theory developed to further explore its construct within a wider audience, to determine if it is readily transferable/applicable or indeed if there is scope for further development and application. This could contribute both to the emerging literature on RL and also to the current literature on process theory.

Beyond the immediate suggestions here, there were a number of other areas of interest (e.g. RLs recruiting responsible managers) that warrant further research.

## **7.7 Reflections**

As I approach the end of my PhD journey I feel I have learnt a great deal and have potentially achieved 'conscious competence', in that I now understand what it is that I do not know and am capable of dealing with this, but it is a challenge and requires a lot of thought and work. Certainly, with what I have learnt over the last 5+ years, I do feel that I am now in a good position to start a PhD! I can imagine this is not an uncommon reflection.

My area of research has seen me pulled into two camps of interest, leadership and responsible/ethical business, often this is literal where at conferences I have had to choose which SIG to engage with and participate in. Interestingly, it is my choosing to participate in the Sustainable and Responsible Business SIG within the British

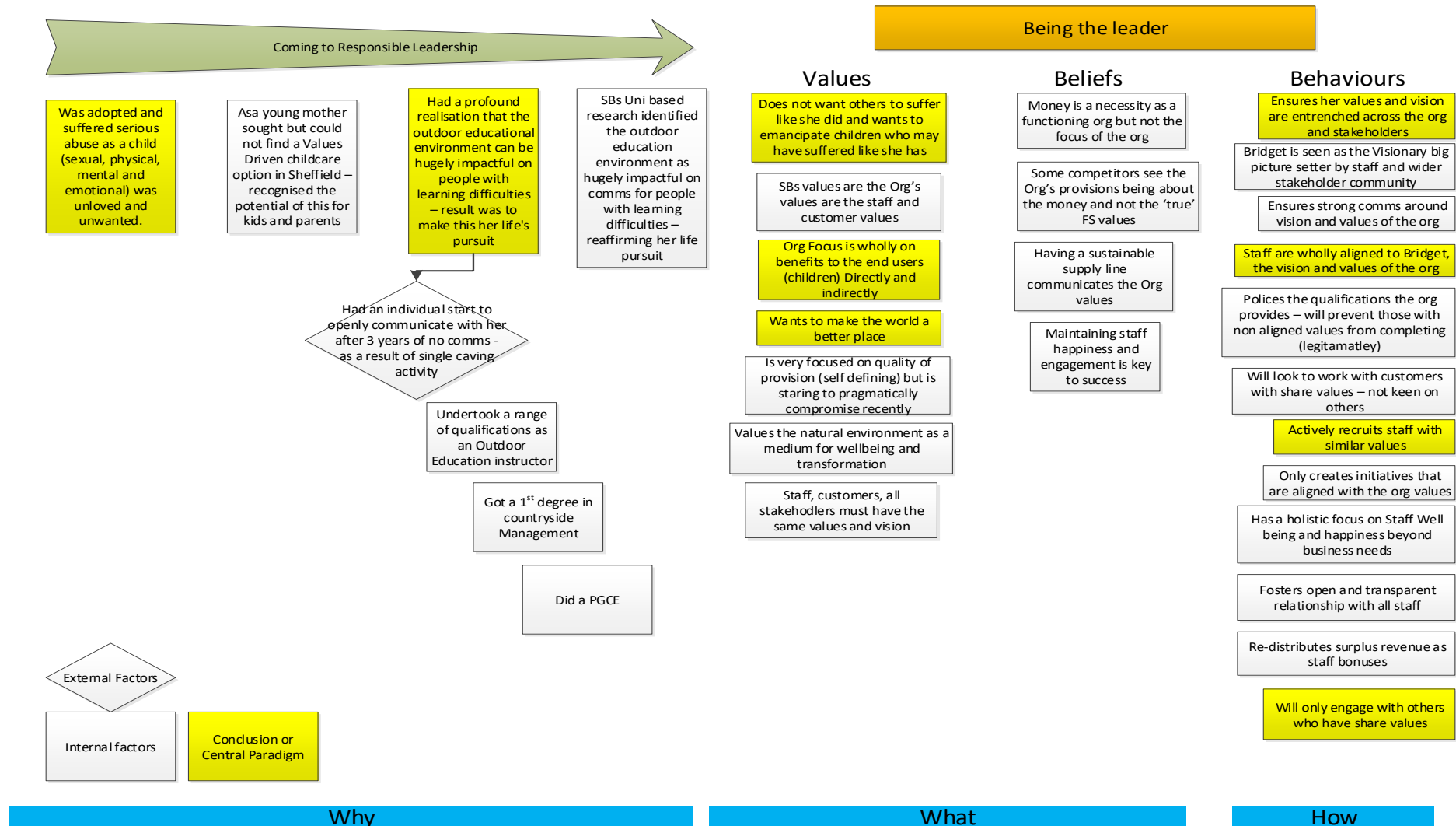
Academy of Management that demonstrates well that this is the field I am drawn to and see my future research aspirations being aligned with. However, I have realised that sitting across two camps is not without its challenges, namely that each feel that my work is not always sufficiently 'true' to that discipline and should engage more with the contemporary leadership or responsible business literature. However, I do believe that this has been a key learning point for me within this project and that I have managed to do both disciplines equal justice within the scope of this thesis and have not erred toward my personal interest in responsible business.

I found the early days of this project extremely enlightening when it came to my studies of the research philosophies and how my views were (or were not) aligned with various thinkers past and present. I do not think I have ever truly been a positivist but equally I do not think I had ever been able to express my philosophical beliefs and interests due to a lack of understanding and language. Finding Richard Rorty and reading about his views (and his predecessors) on Pragmatism was a revelation for me where I believe I found my philosophical home. This is particularly so in the objective ontological and subjective epistemological view and also in that the 'truth' in a thing or idea is closely linked with its useful application; there is legitimacy in practice that informs theory that informs practice. I myself have spent over twenty years in the business world and am now an academic; as a result, I have significant experience of each world dominated by its narrative of theory or practice and can see the benefits for both worlds where this can co-exist. This, of course, is what led me to my central research question; what is responsible leadership in practice?

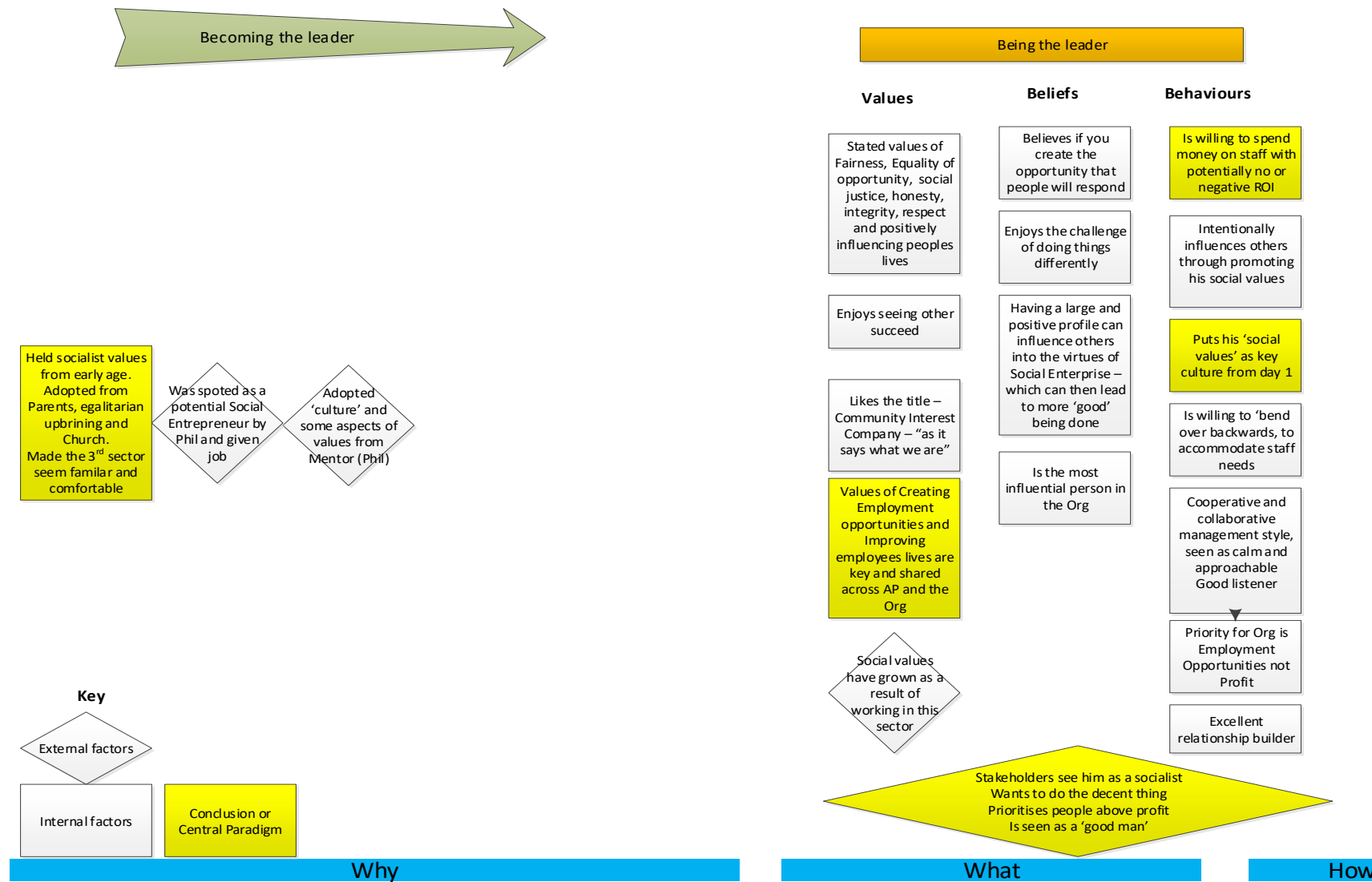
## **8     Appendices**

# Appendix 1 – Responsible Leader Journey Analysis

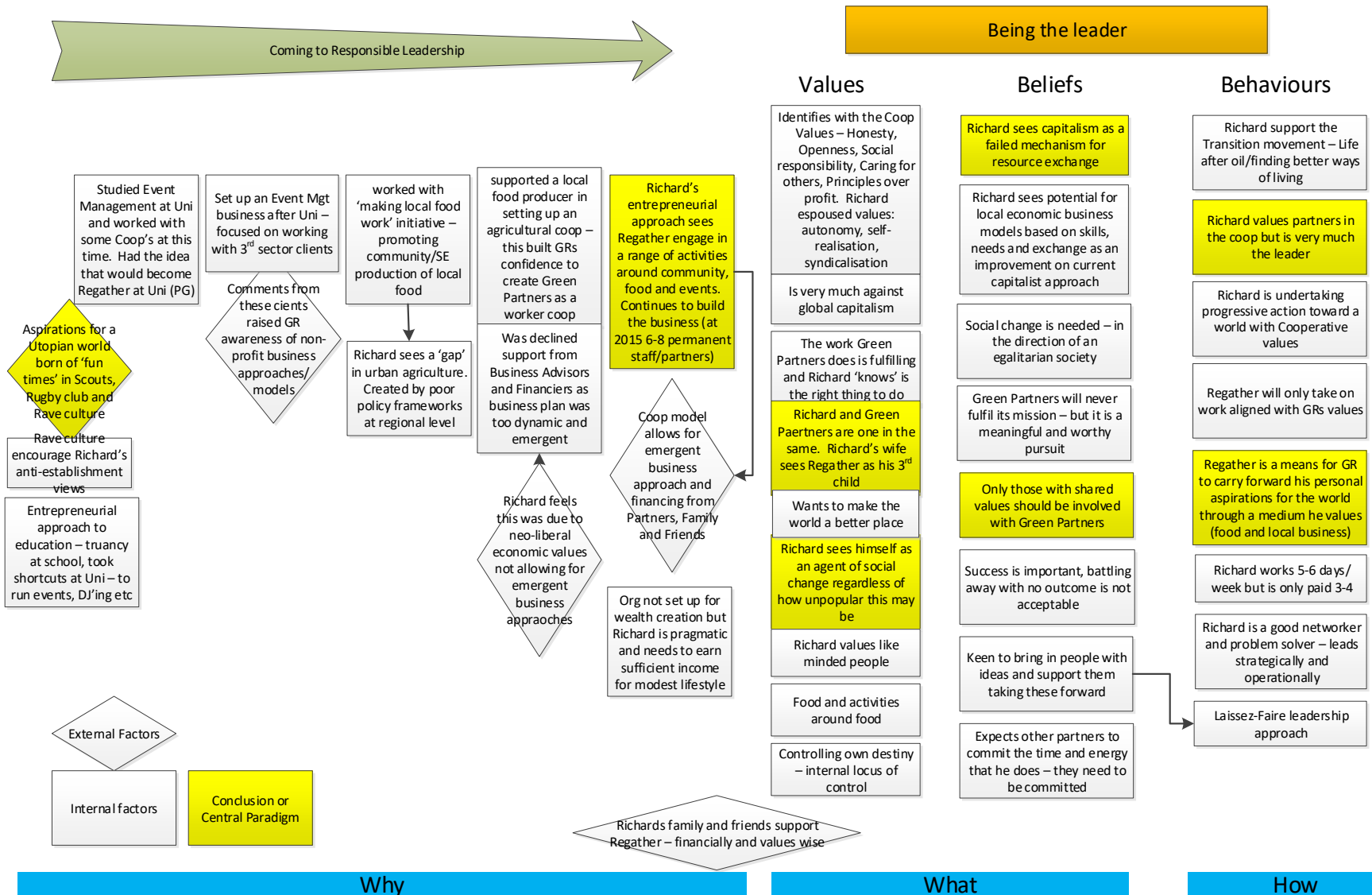
## Bridget – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours



## Peter – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours

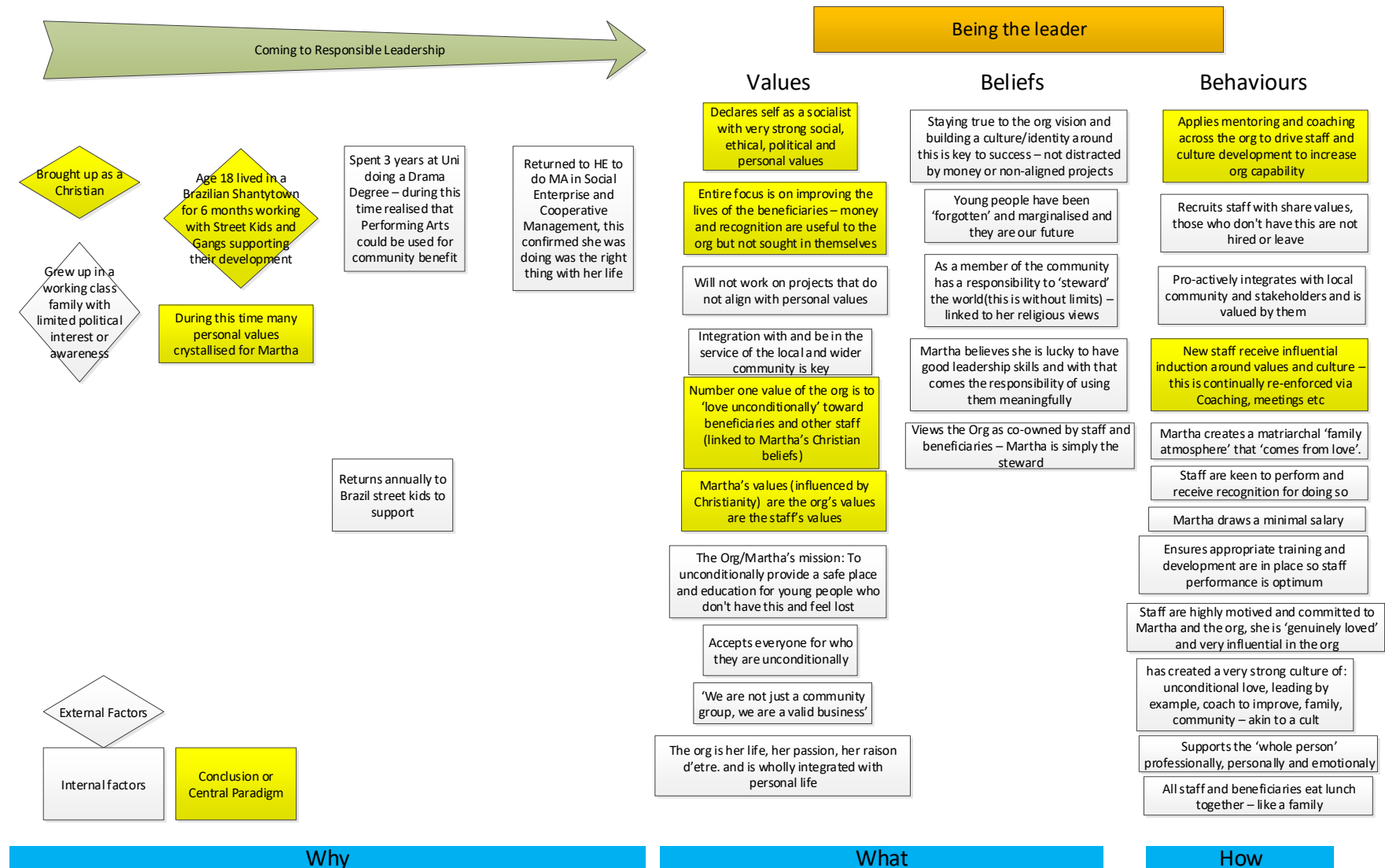


## Richard – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours

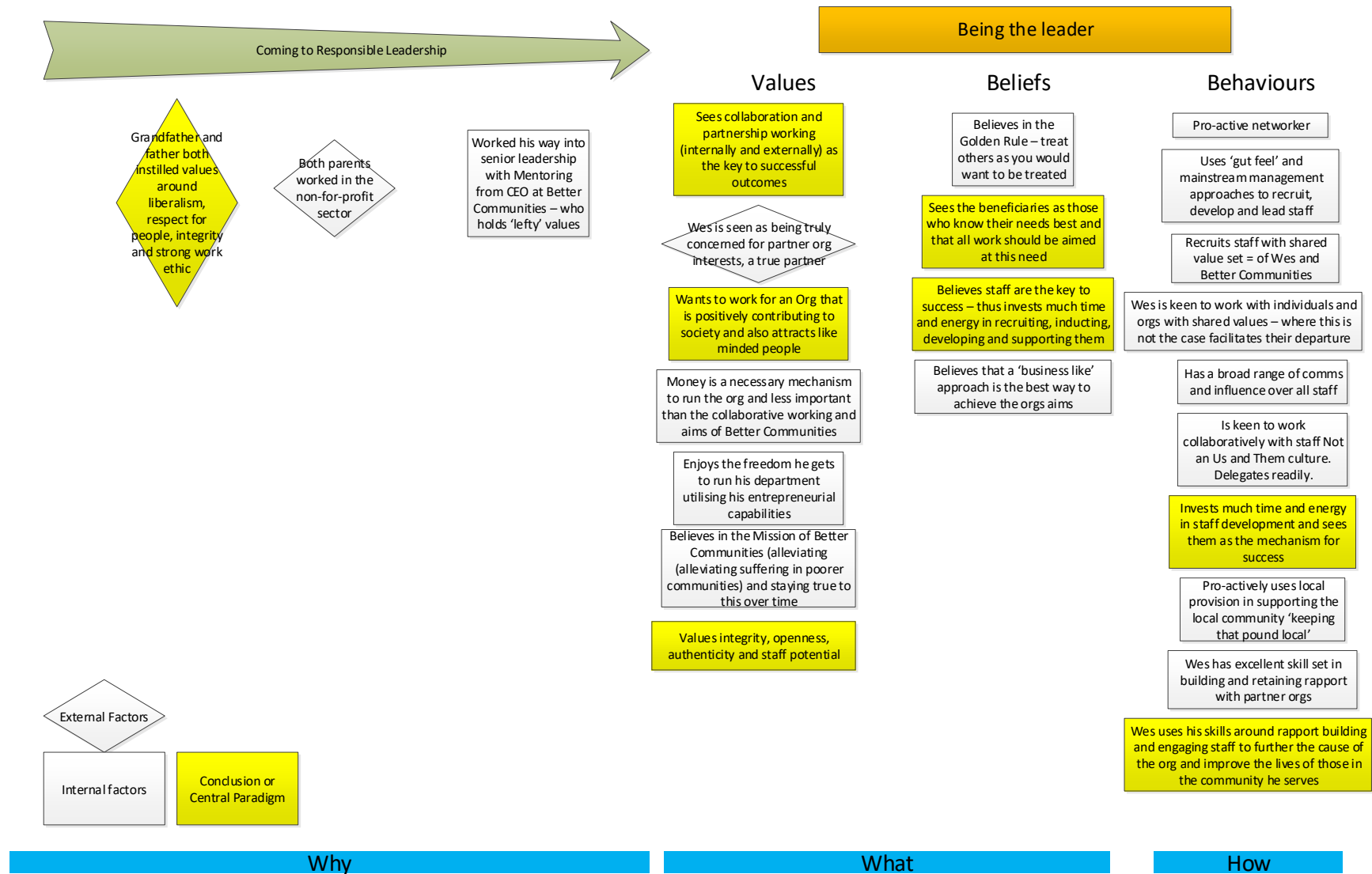




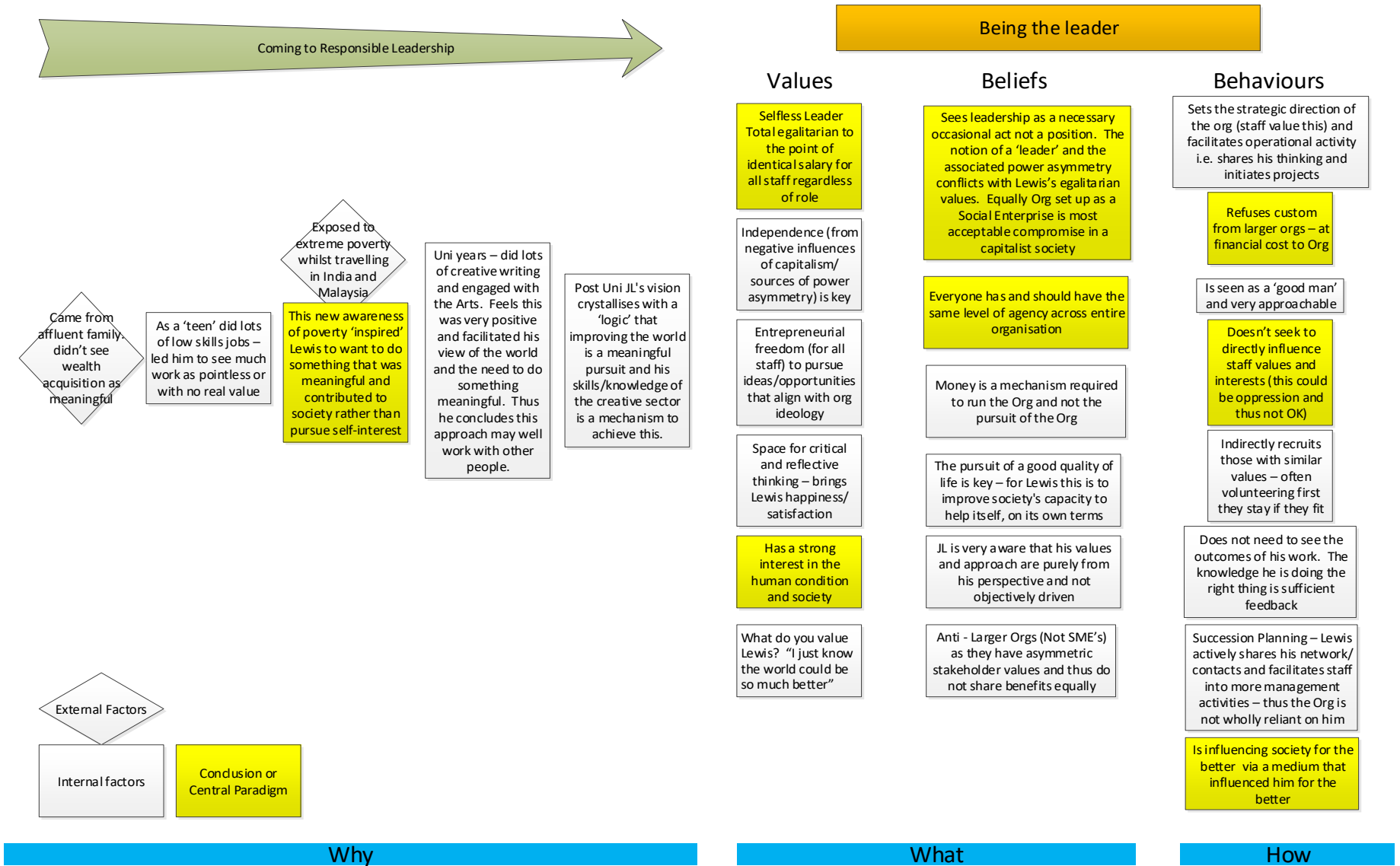
## Martha – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours



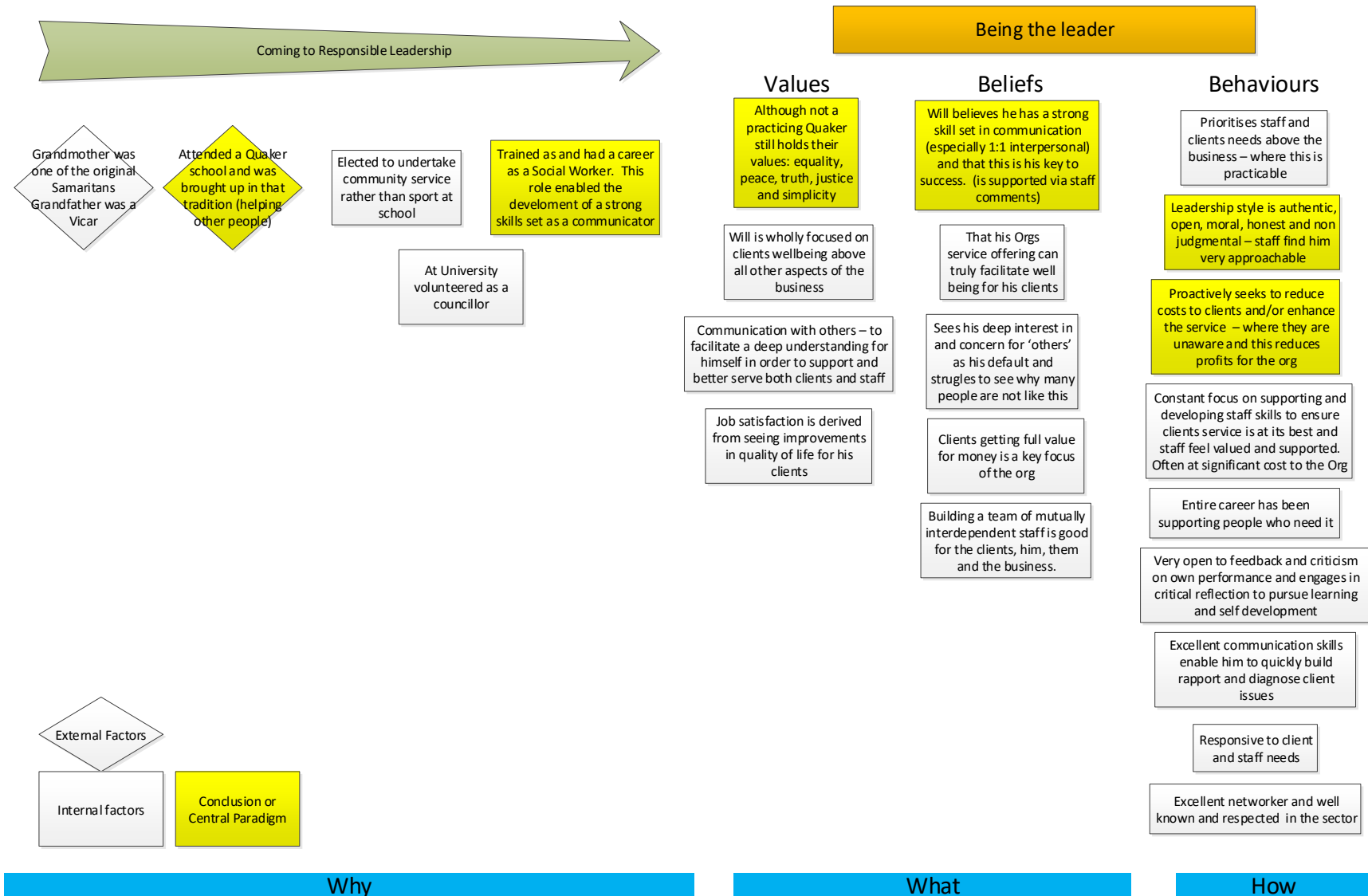
## Wesley – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours



## Lewis – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours



## Will – Values, Beliefs and Behaviours



## **Appendix 2 - Sample Interview Transcripts**

### **Interview with Martha from The Stage**

Preamble conversation about who we both knew and had links with – settled into the interview well as a result

ME One of the reasons I asked you to participate was because of your reputation and also because you are a social enterprise. Can I start by asking why have you set up The Stage within this framework?

MARTHA: Originally I looked at setting up as a charity as this is the main way within the Arts. But after lots of research I realised that I would be limited in how I could grow it and I realised that things like fundraising and profit start to become quite specific and limited. So I was quite hesitant on that so then I decided that I was clear that I wanted a model that wasn't reliant on grant funding and I wanted that because we started as a company in 2008 and in terms of the arts world this was then there was limited funding and lots of problems. The recession hit the arts world in early 2008. So it was a moment where I didn't want to rely on the arts council. So then I started and managed to get some funding from SCEDU they were my consultant and they described what a social enterprise was and I didn't know and it was quite new then so I said OK and they explained what an SE was and how it is similar to a business but you can also apply for funding you can be seen as a charity if you decide that is what you want. So that is the route I went down, not blindly as they guided me but kind of, there was a lot of trust put in SCEDU as what they were doing was listening to me and then saying, you are describing an ethical business model and that leads back to a SE.

ME So tell me more about this ethical business model, how would you describe that?

MARTHA: What I wanted from the beginning and is what I hope I have created is ... so our objectives are to do with making the performing arts accessible to everyone, they are to do with working nationally and internationally with vulnerable people of all ages and they are to do with working in partnership with different community groups and groups within the city. What I wanted was a model that was community and staff lead so I wanted a space where I could offer performing artists that had graduated some work, because at the time there were very limited opportunities in the north for performing artists and I decided I wanted to stay up north. So it was also providing employment opportunities and training because what I also found being a new graduate was that there was really limited training on anything like this and although I wanted to be in the performing arts (and I still do commercially) I wanted something that was giving back to the community because I had spent 3 years doing a drama degree and realised there were lots of ways you could use performing arts for community benefit. And I had worked in Brazil with street children and that was a big thing that I wanted to have a base in Brazil and work with the charity I worked with in Brazil and I still work with them. And to be able to offer them services and eventually have a base over there. So everything that I was describing to them was pointing straight back to communities, socially, locally and internationally. And then I have worked in Brazil with street kids and gangs which is why then I developed that work here in the UK and now I go back there and I train professionals over there on how to work with the techniques that we use with kids. So really that was all pointing to that and as time went on you start to realise this is what its about and then a few years ago I did a Masters degree and that was in Social Enterprise and Cooperative management and that was in many ways it was a confirmation that I was doing many things right so it reaffirmed a lot of what I was doing. Then on the other side it made me think about employee ownership and actually what do I want my employees to feel and how do I want the kids to feel like they have ownership and their parents as well? So my board of directors is made up of parents of the children that come here.

ME So like a governorship?

MARTHA: A little bit yes. And I did that initially as in the early days I struggled to get directors on board, but I think now if I went to the local community I think it would be easier as we are bigger and well known. But at the time it was hard so I announced it at one of our meetings requesting any interest and we have had a group of parents on it for a couple of years. However some of their kids are now moving on so we are looking at how we progressively replace them as directors so they don't all leave at once. So that worked well and was a mixture of parents with different backgrounds. I am also now considering a student council so we have a range of students from the different classes where the students can have their say and tells us what they would like.

ME So all these stakeholders are engaging in the direction of the organisation

MARTHA: Yes and one of the ways we work this is, if we get a parent ring us with an enquiry and they say they don't see any classes local to them. We tell them where the nearest classes are and if that is not suitable we tell them if they are able to get a group of kids together local to them we will happily start a class for them. Or if they are part of the school we will chat to them and see if we can start an afterschool club there. So we are very responsive to random communities that we don't know and we have set classes up for specific groups and if they slowly decline that's OK and other classes have been going for years and years. So we try and be as responsive as we can be.

ME Can I ask why then why did you not create a profit making organisation?

MARTHA: Part of that going back to my values within performing arts. As although I love commercial theatre and have worked in it, I learnt very early on that actually I don't love the 'bums on seats' idea in theatre. Actually I just directed a musical in Liverpool and the reason I did it was because it was a topic that could be connected back and it was for a CIC. The reason I did that was because it could come back to current issues and coming back to my personal values I have very strong social, ethical, political and personal values and I am a socialist at heart. So for me within performing

arts everything I do I ask what is the social and political connection here. So even if I was doing a west end production I would be looking at how can I connect this with the here and now, which a lot of musical directors would not do as it was commercial. So I will never end up working on the west end but that's fine as this is just who I am as an individual and as an artist that leaks out into my artwork. So I guess it is the same with business as that is another form of my artwork. So for me it is not about the money, although obviously I need to live.

ME You mentioned earlier that you draw very little from the organisation?

MARTHA: No I don't. I have drawn money from it in the past. But I have never drawn a high wage ever. The money I earn now is from other stuff not from mind apart it is from consultancy stuff and theatre direction and professional theatre work not from Mindapart. This is partly as it helps to build the business up as well as you start to be recognised as still being a professional in the theatre world so the kids that see me doing that and want to go into the professional theatre world see that and it is important that we keep those contacts. So for me it is about getting the balance of the two. Though we are very community focused the tendency in performing arts is when you talk about a community performing arts group then people think amateur dramatics or semi-professional. But my emphasis is that we are all professionals and everyone is a trained teacher and we all work in the industry still, which is really rare. So that is a real emphasis for me and actually cut people short when they say you are just a community group – no we are not, we are a valid business. We may not be for profit but we are here to be a functioning business that also supports the community. So people can misinterpret who we are and not see us as a valid business, which is not accurate. It is the same in the performing arts world, if you're name is not known are you really that valid? This is another reason for doing the professional work as it gets my name out there in the industry. So it validates me more. So this all links back to my ethical values.

ME So I am assuming you will retain the SE status going forward or will you change?



MARTHA: No. Part of the reason is that I am a bit stubborn. But the main reason is that to me a social enterprise is no less a business than a commercial business it just means we have more of an ethical stance on things. Actually I genuinely believe that this is part of where our success has come from because parents want their kids to learn these skills but they also know we will put their kids first and that also they are paying their fees and it is not going into directors pockets but is going back into the organisation and their kids. I genuinely think that is one of the reasons we do so well and I think it is one of the reasons the council support us.

ME You mentioned earlier stakeholders and you mentioned the council as a contractor, others would be the kids or young adults, the parents, your employees, who else would be in your stakeholders?

MARTHA: The universities, students of the Unis on placement, volunteers some who are really good and I have tried to pay them on occasion but they refuse and tell me they have a job and don't want paying. So what a great testament for the organisation that people actively want to contribute in that way. For me literally everyone is a potential stakeholder as they could be on the board, have kids, be a kid, work at an educational institution so because of the work we do and we are so broad, which is intentional everyone is a potential stakeholder. So even big business events I see everyone as a potential stakeholder. And of course the charity in Brazil and their stakeholders. Also the police especially the sexual exploitation team as we have a lot of cases of your girls that have been sexually exploited so we get referrals here as we are quite good at working with these individuals and are known for that. Other referrals are kids that have mental health issues such as eating disorders, self-harming, so we get referrals from social workers, community support teams, mental health team pretty much anyone who could be working with your people and we often advocate for our young people at multi agency meetings and what have you.

ME Trying to pull that together, why all these people and agencies and why are they important?

MARTHA: Because they are part of the community we are linked with and that is the be all and end all really. We are about and this is why we are based here in a community share space working in cohesion and we are one of the longest standing tenants here at Burton Street foundation. So it is about belonging to a community as this is what we are trying to create for our kids and you will here the kids say 'the The Stage family' and for me that is important especially where they come from less functional families. So when they are here we make sure we do things like all eat together at lunchtime and we will sit round a table and chat and find out what we all have been up to during the week. Just surface level stuff that is important to them and us. And when they leave us they always come back to visit or help and the council and other providers think this is great. Also we refuse to kick kids out, where others would we don't exclude kids unless they are presenting serious dangers to themselves staff or others.

ME What is The Stage responsible for, I know it is theatre and dance but beyond that within this community, what are you doing for this community?

MARTHA: We are providing alternative education provision for kids who are not attending school, we offer a safe space for those kids where they can develop and be themselves. We always ensure we distinguish between behaviour and who they are as many of the kids have challenging behaviours. So we are re-educating them on this and more traditional topics including science, maths and what have you, as well as the performing arts. So we provide education in a creative way. For some we can be the difference in them going back into school and them staying out of school. So we are developing confidence in kids, social skills and supporting the schools. So we bring crime down and support local community cohesion

ME That's all great to hear about. Can I ask specifically then, why do you do all this?

MARTHA: Because, at the moment one of my key drive behind this is that I don't believe as a society we give young people enough of a voice and I feel that they are a forgotten generation. And I think that started in my generation and from then

onwards they have been forgotten and I think you only need look at what is going on in the world like the children refugees coming into this country and what is happening to them. So I do it because I believe these are our future leaders and that we seem to have just forgotten that and that there is a whole generation that is one or two generations above me that are running the world for themselves. So for me it is about giving them a safe place as many don't have that.

ME So you clearly have strong values that are morally based. So how do you ensure that the consistency of message and values comes through your staff and volunteers when they are working?

MARTHA: So, leading by example. I am not a micro manager. One of the ways I do lead is through coaching so every staff member gets coached by me. Then they will coach each other as it goes down the organisation. It is very much done through mentoring and coaching and this is what we do with the kids too. So the entire org there is a huge mentoring and coaching value and culture. I am just about to put all of my staff on a mentoring course with Sheffield Hallam Uni and I am going to do it too although I have various qualifications here already.

ME So this is you leading by example?

MARTHA: Yes. So that is a very big culture. And also we do regular training and one of the first things I say to staff is 'what is your ethos, why do you want to do this, for the money or the values' we say we cant give them the money (Laughs). But this can be the perception as we do really well and are seen as doing well but I wish I could pay my staff more than I do, that's the reality. So this is a good base line as what we find is that those doing it for the money don't last 2 minutes, so they tend to leave. We do only pay national wage and also in performing arts is everyone is freelance so there are lots of opportunities and some pay quite well. But of course this model does not work for the core staff and performing artists don't always see that. So you are trying to re-train this culture as this is what they have been taught from day one on the courses they have been on as performing artists.

I would say that retaining staff is a real challenge and is always a discussion at board meetings. So we often have set period contracts until we know they are committed or not.

So the first thing I often say to staff is that if you can't love unconditionally then you won't find this job easy. If you don't want to love unconditionally or you can't do this then you will find it very hard to work for us because of the people we work with and that is my number one rule. That is our number one value.

ME Where does the edge of your responsibility lay? You mention lots of your influences on young people and how you seek to include them in society. So what would you say you are not responsible for?

MARTHA: I don't feel like there is an edge. Because I believe that as an individual as part of a community that I have a responsibility as part of the community to build and be part of building a community, locally, nationally, internationally whatever. I believe that I have a responsibility to steward this world and I guess that comes back to my religion as well.

ME Are you religious?

MARTHA: Yes I am a Christian. I think it is partly to do with that but also it is a deep rooted value so based on that even as an organisation I don't feel that there is a limit to that responsibility.

ME It is interesting you touch on your religion, how has that influenced you in all of this?

MARTHA: That has influenced the unconditional love concept. And yes the responsibility element of it, that actually for me it is greater than just being an organisation there is something greater that is attached to it for me. And that doesn't mean that this is the case for all of my staff. But that concept of us being part of this society and we have to be responsible for that permeates through to the staff and it is things like for example if we have a staff night out I expect my staff to behave and not get ridiculously drunk and just little things like that actually people might argue

that. But no if you are out with me and The Stage you are representing a The Stage because everywhere we go everyone is a potential stakeholder. So lets have some fun but not overstep the mark and we work with lots of kids who take drugs and drink so its not good and it is not what I want people to look at our organisation and see that.

ME So would there be any stakeholders that you would intentionally avoid?

MARTHA: Errmmm. I guess very much on a case by case situation. So for example the local authority doesn't hold the same values but I also know that you can't change something if you aren't within it. So the best change happens from within, so for me if I am not in it I can't change it. However we had an EU contract a while ago that linked us with an organisation in Ghana and as time went on it occurred to me that we did not share the same values and so I said no and pulled away from the work. So my initial reaction is not no but at a case by case level things may change. An example would be Nestle who I personally boycott and recently saw they were talking about the apprenticeship they are doing at Sheffield Hallam and if I am honest and they came to me offering opportunities for our kids then I might talk to them. Not for the opportunity for them but because by being with them they might begin to change things. They when I saw them at Hallam they were on a panel next to John Lewis and I thought what are John Lewis doing and then I thought he is being quite clever as he is working more closely to them and having a positive influence. So for me it is about having those influences but staying true to yourself within that and being OK to disagree with them.

ME You mentioned your values like that fact that you're a socialist and your religion influences your values. Do you know the source of this and where your values come from?

MARTHA: I think there is an element of upbringing certainly with the religious element. Although as I get older I question things, in many ways I am quite academic and as a result I will question and research the issue. Its not just upbringing as I am the

black sheep in the family, as I am very much a socialist and my family is not very politically aware and my family are very working class and aren't as aware politically. So politically and socially I am much more aware and more likely to engage in those kinds of discussion.

The other stuff has come from my experiences, such as I lived in Brazil when I was 18 and I was living in Shante towns. So I guess for me 18 is the age where you really start to develop and work out who you are. So there is a lot of influence from living in Brazil for 6 months at that age and then I went out there every year spending holiday time there.

ME *...explanation of looking for acts of RL to chat with other staff members to chat with..*

MARTHA: Act of RL: I would say the way that I manage. The fact that I am not a micro manager and I am all about releasing my staff and this is why I coach them all. So I would say my style of management and I think all of my staff would say that it is very different.

ME What is it about that that is different ?

MARTHA: I would say because I am encouraging them to self-lead. So facilitating their own decision making. Generally I encourage them to make the decisions. Which comes back to the shared values aspect as this approach wont work if they don't have the same values. But they see that very quickly because if you try and self-lead without those values you will come up against something, not necessarily me but something. E.g. if they were teaching and decided to shout at a kid, they will realise very quickly that it isn't going to work. So I guess I encourage self-learning and self-leadership.

ME So could I chat with a couple of your staff on this?

MARTHA:

Heidi – is the manager here and has worked from me from the beginning. I have mentored her into taking my role here now

Elaine – is a teacher and has been with us 2 years

ME Anything else you want to add

MARTHA: I would add that this whole thing is a lifestyle it is much more than coming to work. It is being a leader in the community its being a leader with everyone I engage with be it in the shop or on a night out. It is a bigger thing, I think if you are privileged enough to have leadership skills then you have to be responsible for that and you have to steward them. So my entire lifestyle (laughs) it is just who I am.

### **Interview with Richard from Green Partners**

Preamble conversation about who we both new and had links with – settled into the interview well as a result

ME: So tell me about then, so I can get the scene tell me about Green Partners and you and your role there and how you came to be doing what you do.

RICHARD: So I thought of Green Partners as an idea when I was doing and MA at the University of Warwick. It was an artistic business management programme I decided to do that because an experience I had at the HUBS which was the National Centre for Popular music I was on a New Deal programme. The experience I had there was such that I was disillusioned by the waste of millions of pounds on this thing having just come out of University and there was recession at the time. So the various factors that ended me up at Warwick I think realistically probably doing for the first time academically being challenged and doing my best – I used to truant from school my

degree was not text book process. Always busy doing stuff, promoting, DJ'ing, running parties those sorts of things. So at Warwick I wrote an essay about on-line business models and how it would be good to have communities of people and a platform in which they could interact and share video and photos. That led eventually to setting up in business as Green Partners and starting off as an event's organiser, to start with me it was me as a sole trader and was an events business and then I set up as a company limited by shares still had lots of voluntary and community organisations as clients and feedback from them was that this is great but surely you could be non-profit or more aligned with what we do and I was interested in that but didn't quit know what to do. Then rewind to some coops that I had interactions with at Warwick but they were too fringe to peripheral, then fast forward to something called 'making local food work' a national programme teaching people about different forms of community and social enterprise around food. A really key part of that was about coops I got involved in setting up a community supporting in agriculture coop that in the end wasn't for me but gave me that experience and confidence to then decide to turn Green Partners from a company into a coop with two other people who were interested. And then that was in 2010 and we found premises and 2 or 3 years we had a hand to mouth wilderness whilst also teaching at SHU part time and making just enough to get by. And in 2015 summer I finished at SHU and was full time at Green Partners I am the only founder member is still involved. Now we have between 6 and 8 part time positions I work full time but the business can only afford to pay me 3 or 4 days out of the 5 or 6 I work – but that is OK I can manage that. Other people are on 2 or 3 days per week contracts. What is Green Partners now? It is a worker coop and it specialises in activities around food and drink and events and festivals. We do have a 3<sup>rd</sup> amorphous project, you know greenhouse where lots of stuff comes and goes – like an incubator for new ideas and projects. We have a veg box scheme, brewery, catering and kitchen for hire. They work together as a functional basis across the year.

ME Tell me on that, which is an interesting point. A coop, why is Green Partners a coop?



RICHARD: It was I suppose a choice made out of a degree of dissatisfaction over what else is available and also a sense that there was for the first 2 – 3 years we made a model out of not knowing what we wanted to do. That was the business model was open and had the ability to adapt around ideas and people coming in. There was a conscious decision to create a business that could accommodate people and their skills, interest and ideas and look to resource the ideas, share the risk, share the rewards and weather that start-up phase. What Green Partners is now is a product of that process and I don't think it is not just coincidence that we have ended up doing what we do around, essentially key parts of post-industrial economy, sort of service, hospitality, experience economy. The fruit and veg box is an anomaly, we are not a primary producer but we will become a producer and this is a forerunner of that. So yes the decision to be a coop was one based on an understanding of what we wanted to create that was this grouping of business and we had these elaborate ideas of how to formalise that process and didn't really realise those ideas because of there is not the culture of that way of working in the UK and there isn't a sufficient level of support and resource on an individual business level – you know, for an organisation that goes out to achieve the means by which you can do that sort of activity. There is this tendency in the UK, in contrast to other parts of the continent and north America to box off supporting business and then business themselves. There is investment in business but you don't get that investment to create a model that evolves, you have got to have this predicted, high growth, belt and braces plan.

ME You mean a utilitarian model of economic efficiency?

RICHARD: Yes, they want to know where it is going to start from, what the trajectory is, where it is going to land and what they are going to get out of it in the process. They are also very risk averse and this is across the board whoever can finance this sort of thing. So we choose the coop structure to enable that kind of evolution and in the end financed it through friends and family.

ME Was that the reason for the coop mechanism for other members coming in with funds and risk.

RICHARD: Yes, that was the principle the theory. The reality is that I am still the only major investor in Green Partners – financially speaking. Other people have made significant investments of time and trust and they are certainly of that type. So it was about the sharing of risk, resource, skills, time and we explored different means of exchange, in the end again it didn't weather our neo-liberal capitalist society that we are in.

ME So you chose the coop structure to share the risk, ownership and what have you. Was that the only reason? You could perhaps have shared this as a regular organisation, why did you not choose that approach?

RICHARD: That was maybe out of a degree of naivety. We wanted to do something and thought that coops was the way, based on training and research and reading that we had done. As an outcome it is not perfect, the coop structure we have could be different and could be better but I suppose one of the key things that made the coop option the most attractive was the values, the value base that underpins the coop movement and that value proposition isn't something that any of the other ..... You don't hardwire that in to the other legal structures you have to impose that. So sure you can create a culture and way of working organisationally and so on but untimely the connection with a wine and cooperative movement that is international, is values based and that represents a particular way of doing business that existed successfully for a significant period of time prior to what has since emerged as globalised capitalism. So we are harking back to something, perhaps a degree of romanticism, naivety a degree of utopian stubbornness, anarchism as well. So autonomy, self-realisation, syndicalisation. So setting up ways of organising small groups around certain ideas. Now what that means to us is around a reconfiguration of the little mesters tradition in Sheffield and we relate to that more strongly that, say punk politics. The little mesters tradition was self-organising based on individual skill and talent, they configured small and big groups of people configured around the needs in a production chain. This goes back to pre-industrial and the narrative around labour and the organisation of labour and the value exchange around that.

ME So will you remain a coop then?

RICHARD: Oh yes. We will when we have the time and the resource look under the bonnet and change key aspects, like defining the objects, we might put an asset lock into the governing documents that will make us more attractive to funders. But we will stay as a coop because that is what Green Partners is really. We set up a charity as we were doing lots of charitable type work and felt this was undermining our trading business. So we surgically extracted the charitable purpose work, that enables the coop to get to a point where it is sustainable business.

ME Coming back to Green Partners, who do you see as being the stakeholders, or who are you and Green Partners responsible too?

RICHARD: As a worker coop we are responsible to ourselves. We are the members and we don't have separate board or shareholders and that is good. On an equal basis one of a group of trade managers, there is a hub which is essentially an admin function of the organisation and that is myself Rachel and Doug. We only have a small amount of time based on budget overheads. There is marketing and this is led by Tim but we are looking at our trade managers taking this on. Marketing is important now that we know exactly what we are doing. The trade managers lead on the various functional elements of the business. I have a strategic leadership role but it is not specifically in line with those trading activities, the other members have the skills there. But since last year I have been able to afford time in the week to think more strategically as the business has become more stable. So I can spend time thinking about what Green Partners is set up to achieve, which is around creating employment, meaningful work for people in a local setting. So I have identified some more strategic work like supporting local community initiatives, getting involved with the universities, the local authority and informing through dialogue and narrative on certain issues relating to economics, the role of small organisations in developing a resilient local economy and getting involved in research agendas around urban agriculture. All of which is strategically aligned with what we do on a day to day basis.

There was a lack of context in what we were doing, there aren't many examples of what we are doing. A lot of what we were doing was in the form of think tank policy research, where we said let's do it and find out if it works and if it doesn't work we will stop doing it and if it does work we will continue doing it. So lots more action based learning by doing and is a product of the environment it is working in. So our experience on community economic development is quite unique, our ability to identify urban agriculture as a direction we should be moving in is a product of identifying a mismatch between city region, city and local developments in policy and framework that that all exists in, and one thing to identify something that could join up those different levels of what's going on but also address some of the disadvantaged communities and that this is holistic and not just focusing on one aspect such as environment or one community framework.

ME So what is it that Green Partners set out to do?

RICHARD: To create a mutual local economy, being one that has a coop at its heart, that enables the equitable redistribution of surplus value that is created by the production of good and services. It's nothing new although not many people are doing it now though. We want it to work at a local level we are not interested in world domination. We can see that there is space in which a group can be engaged, I mean 'Power to change' call it community business and they have this quite complex set of criteria that is an ideal and can be quite purist. Green Partners is a utopian project that can never be fully achieved.

ME Sounds fascinating and I have to say it speaks to me. It does sounds like you have lots of operational activity that could be philanthropically and strategically you are dipping your toe in various networks to influence them. How do you engage your co-workers in this, or are they engaged in this?

RICHARD: How things have evolved, what we do is a product of people that have brought the ideas and skills to the coop. The people that lead on those areas have changed and may at one time have been unpaid but had similar interests. So if you

can create the environment that these people can come in and leave again without undermining them as a individual or the organisation that has hosted that activity. So both the box and the microbrewery and the events side of things are still going by the people that set them up but both the brewery and the box were a product of individuals that were passionate but frankly were not interested in a long term career in this kind of role. On a week to week basis it is about have an on-going conversation and recognising there are certain values, like the box scheme for example is seasonal, local, organic and there is always conversations about how we have to achieve at least one of those and if that is the case why only one. Organic is a must other factors less so. That is where Mary the box manger will hold certain values and strategic goals as in what we do.

ME Did Mary come with those or were those learnt

RICHARD: Specifically those they come from initially the box setting it up, but then Fran's background, she has done a lot of organic horticulture. Working on organic farms and interactions with our suppliers who are certified organic producers and they are very passionate about that and they can articulate the case for organic horticulture and broadly it is something that enables us to achieve our objectives at the same time. It's about the soil, the working conditions, fair pay and a number of aspects to the organic standard. So it is about recognising useful frameworks.

ME Do you see Green Partners as having a boundary to its activity? Is there stuff you wont do or are there organisations or individuals that you wont work with?

RICHARD: That is an interesting question. So early on there were various approaches from people who for the right reasons say an opportunity to operate within a more formalised arrangement to do things that were ethically unsound.

ME According to who?

RICHARD: According to us as a group of coop members, self-judged. One example was that early on someone wanted to set up a spread betting syndicate. We didn't understand exactly how it would work but they thought Green Partners would be a

good way of creating money within a group of people. Their motivation was to get that money back into the community, which was interesting. But we felt that was not their only motivation and also gambling in general terms are frowned upon, morally and ethically speaking. There was also when we set up an early year's childcare provision for about 18 months. A group of mums approached us and said they wanted something alternative to the main stream – like forest schools or Steiner approach. They put a proposal together but it ended up being a disaster because as parents they weren't prepared to do what was needed to make it work, they simply like the idea of it. So engaging with Ofsted setting up the business etc they weren't into. So two examples of where either an ethical or operational basis was an adaptation too far for us. But the potential for adaption still remains with us but we have less room for this now mainly down to physical premises.

ME Let me ask you about you Richard. Your values how, or indeed do they influence how you run the organisation?

RICHARD: It is fair to say that they do I think it is also accurate given the question that Green Partners is an embodiment of what I want to do with my life. It is because I have committed a life time savings, my wife describes Green Partners as my first child. I don't know if it is an overt expression of those value. You know I have been a member of Greenpeace and also stood as a parliamentary candidate and also for local council. I stood on the basis that if I did win I would be pleased and would fulfil the mandate but I don't think there was ever much of a chance of wining. The lesson I learnt was that there is that ability to commit oneself to something and for it to be unsuccessful and that is not a rewarding relationship to be in. So for me it was taking my energy away from one thing and putting it into another and finding that that was much more productive and enabled me to make part of a living and eventually a whole living and enabled me to put what is essentially family money, not vast sums, to be able to commit those in a way that is going to make a difference and eventually get that money back out and this will go to my children and it will have been put to work. And that comes from not just my decisions, this comes from support from my

parents and my wife's parents in that they believed in the basic project, which was to put that money to work to create the right sort of living.

ME Can I ask, the money in and money out, are you seeing that purely as a tool?

RICHARD: The objective at the moment is to get the money back out. We don't apply a rate of interest or an expected rate of return.

ME Do it is not an investment portfolio but is a mechanism to support Green Partners in achieving its objectives?

RICHARD: That's right yes. As a family my parents, my mum comes from a welsh hill farm and my dad lived about a news agents and his father was a policeman and they both ended up at Cambridge through what was then positive discrimination, that is opportunities for people who weren't the wealthy elite. They achieved a standard of living and a level of income through astute investment of their time such as buying a house in the right place and they are of the opinion that they have supported myself and my two brothers in various ways. We are all quite entrepreneurial and as a result there is a family portfolio but aspects of what we are doing haven't all made lots of money but they are meaningful and they are a source of happiness and enjoyment both for ourselves and others and it is all down to the meaningfulness of it. And there is a utopian project notion we are trying to create a better world this is actually what we are doing, not trying to make lots of money. I think we have already achieved that to an extent, there is still a long way to go but it is going to be you know 20 odd years as I am going to do it till I'm dead. Why wouldn't I. Its great and it's a product of my own initiative.

ME Let me lead on from that. You mention about a utopian world and making the world a better place. These are your values I take it.

RICHARD: You could say that

ME It would be interesting to hear, where do you think those values come from.

RICHARD: A combination of factors really, personal experience, experimentation with recreational drugs, living in subcultures of rugby, having had really enjoyable teenage years playing rugby with a group of people, scouts spending amazing times in the scout movement, the rave culture – again a form of subculture which was very influential on my perception of the world. Social movements like the coop movement, transition like preparing communities for life after oil – that being a transition movement. Transition is hardwired into Green Partners, we see ourselves as an economic element and a project of the transition movement. We identify with this, in that things are going to get worse before they get better. There needs to be responses to that because the state is a failing state and the market is a failing mechanism for resource exchange. So it is an awareness of things and a willingness to commit whatever resource is available to tackle some of those issues. Not thinking that we will completely succeed but we might make it better. So whether that is like having an allotment and showing my children how to grow food, making sure they don't watch too much TV, making sure they read books and know what they are talking about. We are not hippies, we are more punk. We are not fucking about. We are doing something that is different and something that is difficult and therefore we have to do it well because when people see those attempts potentially fail on the way, then they say it's because they are different. And there are a lot of attempts, I know someone who bought 25 acres of land to live the dream and it nearly killed him. We are not accustomed to the hardship. So lots of factors.

ME What about your co-workers, how would you describe their values. If there are global values within Green Partners?

RICHARD: It varies I think we have always recognised that making a living. If people don't make a living or part of a living out of it then it's not OK. It's about making a living and about that work being meaningful. But if it doesn't fulfil that need for shelter, food, comfort and so on they people are unable to commit and it is nothing to do with values and in fact the value that might drive the commitment can lead to a degree



of self-exploitation. That can be conscious and wilful and can be to its detriment so there is a degree of pragmatism to it. Beyond that there are some really committed competent people who are also on a journey that will have its ups and downs but they wouldn't be doing what they do if it was just for the money they are doing it for a combination of reasons. Like a precarious worker who balances the values versus the living and security that this enables them to achieve and they need to find a balance somewhere in the middle and that means a combination of part time employment, self-employment, volunteering, precarious work like zero hour contract employment. So a combination of things so it would be unfair to judge someone entirely on their behaviour as their values as there are also other pressures on them. I say this from experience, I am a perfect example of self-exploitation, it is with consent, I don't feel like someone is putting it on me. And in that utopian ideal that shouldn't be the case for anybody.

*ME Explains the project and requests suggestions on RL act from which to follow up and speak to those implicated in this...* Can you think of any acts of RL or deeds done that would align with RL that I could talk to people about.

**RICHARD:** I am thinking the box scheme, where we are now thinking of becoming a market garden. There is Mary who volunteered for Green Partners whilst the scheme was being set up and more recently there is a chap called David who is the box delivery driver. David and other co-workers were away for about 3 years working on Organic farms away from Sheffield. Where are heading now is toward setting up a community benefit type coop for the purposes of buying land to develop the market garden. This has taken 7 years so far from conception of the box scheme and David I have only know for the past 6 months. Within all this I have been taking a strategic role within the Sheffield Food Partnership which will support all of this and is part of the Sustainable Food Cities initiative they advocate a particular approach that we will adopt here in Sheffield.

ME So this is a good practice service and you are developing the networks and goodwill that will then support the box scheme that could then be hive off as a new entity that Mary and David will be implicated in?

RICHARD: Yes. There is a need for a strategic framework from which to operate in and there isn't a food partnership in Sheffield. There are various ways of being involved in the local food system but not organised.

ME So would I be OK to talk to Mary and David and ask them about this and how they see all this working and your role in it? Asking them what their experience of this role of RL we have identified and how they see this and what it means to them.

RICHARD: Yes. Although they are leading on this too in their way. Although it wouldn't exist if I wasn't doing what I am doing – if I am not being too immodest.

### **Interview with Wesley: from Better Communities**

Preamble conversation about who we both knew and had links with – settled into the interview well as a result

ME gave overview of project and RL

ME So why do you work here at Better Communities doing what you do?

WESLEY: Well a good starting point is probably that a lot of what Better Communities is and what they do is as a result of my boss Ian Drayton and I think it is his sense of values that has permeated. I have been here 11 or 12 years, so why am I here. I always struggled to find a place where I feel comfortable at work academically and corporately I love, for me it is the fluidity and its about being entrepreneurial as I can

quite entrepreneurial but not in the private business sector way as I don't have that cutting edge. So I think this organisation gives me that freedom to follow up my own leads to run the business as long as it meets its financial obligations. We are very much empowered as staff across the organisation including myself as one of the senior managers I am encouraged to take my own lead. I think there is a corporate responsibility element of this that I want to give back something to the community and it is not about profit it is about social capital so it is about developing your staff and developing local people to work with the organisation and it is also about seeing people from the local community coming through the doors to improve their lives. It's about investing in local organisations, that is where our history is, so Better Communities was set up by local people in 1999 to access government and ESF money, we got about £25M and became part of the council until that money ran out, we then became independent which is when I started. But we are still all about being governed by local people particularly in the north of Sheffield where there is much social deprivation. So this is how we have been for the last 11 or 12 years and during that time much of the management team has remained and as a result we have retained that knowledge and also those values. Within this time we have developed our governance around those values which we then pass down to staff, via inductions, business planning, team meetings and pretty much everything we do reverts back to our values, our mission statement, our objectives. And I think that is why we have been able to grow as a business is because we don't drift in terms of mission, so a lot of charities do drift and become something they aren't.

ME So these 4 main objectives are the ones in your social accounts? [ME has a copy of these]

WESLEY: Yes. So the ethics of a business like this fits in personally with who I am.

ME You mention your entrepreneurial aspect. Can I ask why have you chosen to work for Better Communities then and not a traditional profit making organisation?

WESLEY: I think it is the type of people who work for those business. I come from family who are land agents and work in the non-profit sector so I like business but the people who I work with, which might be the council or the CCG and generally in this sector. Well I personally chime with those people and what they do. That is the main driver for me here I just feel comfortable in an organisation like this and it gets the best out of me.

ME Why do you think that is then?

WESLEY: There are boundaries to create flexibility and creativity in terms of the organisation we have a hierarchy but when we do our org chart we don't have a sense of 'I'm your manager I will tell you what to do', yes we have a strong business plan but it is very much a collective approach, what is the word, clan approach or something. It all comes down to who I am as a person I like to work with people at a single level it is very much I want to treat people how I would be treated myself and it is about that partnership approach as you work together and the best way to achieve your objective is about partnership working and if this was a private business those ethics and the morality that sense of looking out for each other I don't think is there in many of them. Because money is the focus. Of course we still need to run on money and we need to make a surplus to be functional.

ME You mentioned patterns and various organisations, so stakeholder wise who do you see as the orgs stakeholders, who is the organisation responsible too?

WESLEY: Essentially we are accountable to the local population, so we have always had a tri-partite board. We have local residents on our board, about 6 of them, we have local elected councillors and we have co-opted people from local universities, schools, GPS and what have you. Most important for me on that board is having local residents because they are feet on the floor so they are the primary stakeholders whether they are on the board or recipients of our services. The other stakeholders are local organisations and forums and TARIs

(Tenant and residents associations) they are the local people who have set up their local community groups and we support them financially and in capacity building.

ME How do you support them financially?

WESLEY: We have got contracts with the council to develop these community partnership as part of the Betercare contract which is CCG council funding. So this has brought us back to where we were a few years ago, so we develop these partnerships to get the framework and then tendered for work where we won the bid and we then try and invest that money into local providers so we are keeping that pound local. So I know a lot of the partnerships across the city have used that to access the money and we they have used that to prop up their own business and they have to with some of it. I think we are the only partnership where we actually say we will try and outsource as much of our money into local organisations. WE do mapping to work out the need and then design the interventions, and example would be dementia. In this area of the city there is no peer led dementia support for people with early onset dementia so we did some work and we have developed a 'memory café' concept for these people and their careers. And within that we contract out to local providers to deliver this type of work so we are supporting the delivery organisations as well as the end beneficiaries.

ME Within the stakeholders you mention what do you feel your organisations is responsible for?

WESLEY: In terms of health we have key projects such as social prescribing which is a primary care referral service. So within that a lot of the work we do is with GPs and is very much about stakeholder engagement. This projects promotes services we provide that may be of use as non-medical referrals such as volunteering, physical health and mental health opportunities. So perhaps people who are depressed that don't need medication full time and need to get out into the community, so we raise awareness of what is out there to solicit referrals into a range of projects. So it is all about capacity building and relationship building and within that we develop contractual work with GPs. So from my view you can marry these social needs with a

strong business ethic and you can use this where you are building relationship and as a result money and opportunities follow. So for me if the two run side by side you get the best of both worlds.

We were also involved in getting people back into work where we tendered for and won some work as a provider within the national 'Work Programme' with G4S. But the reality of delivering this was that we were absolutely under the thumb and we were the only voluntary organisation in Sheffield who handed back that contract. Which is interesting, because it was a financial risk but moreover we were having to cherry pick clients so we could guarantee to get the outcomes. So as a board, as mentioned early it being about local people, this contract did not sit within our values and objectives. So we surrendered that and took a hit. The only employment work we do now is for people who are not mandated so we don't turn people away, so anybody who wants employment support we will work with them.

ME So you are really putting the people ahead of the contracts.

WESLEY: Yes definitely and because we have a fairly substantial business each of the costs centres can subsidise each other and we are viable like that through economics of scale and flexibility in costings. We also have buildings with tenants from small offices to ones like this building with lots of rented space and is a capital asset paid for with funding from our earlier years. And over 70% of our tenants are from the local community which of course supports that economic investment in the local community, 80% of the staff that work for Better Communities are also from the local community. We have also supported local organisations that were struggling, so we have taken over libraries into our physical infrastructure and use them as hubs as well as delivering library services for the council. So we can offer advice to the local community through these hubs and thus diversify our offer and make it work financially.

ME So you have told me who your stakeholders are and what you do with them. Regarding your staff how do you ensure that they are engaged with the work

you do here at SOAR, how do you know there values are aligned with what you want to achieve?

WESLEY: Well it starts off with recruitment. Absolutely it is about.... Well it is not so much about qualifications and experience, although there are competencies, but it is about when they walk in that door how do they fit with the organisations and what is your gut felling? And again on our panel it is not just managers, I always make sure we have representation from a third party organisation so we have that level of objectivity and it is about them buying in to that. So this Friday we are interviewing for someone to support the GP network contract we have set up , so we have a GP practice manager on that panel and there will be me and another senior worker from Better Communities that is not linked with the work. So it is very much I have my own view and sometimes I win and sometimes I loose but it is about what the other people think as they will be working with them, do you think that person understands Better Communities and do you think they will fit in with that team? Generally the people that do, stay with us. Obviously as part of our specification we have a very strong element about local knowledge although we don't specifically try to recruit local people but clearly they will have an advantage in that element. So I think rectuitment is the key element that is where you get your gems and then a very robust induction within a three month probabtionary period we have a months induction. So for the first two weeks new recruits are not doing work, which freaks some people out, we give them two weeks to have free rein to go out and talk to people on the projects. We give them pointers on who to talk to and who to shadow and which organisations to visit and find out what is happening and what Better Communities will expect from you.

ME So quite a big investment in your staff financially and time wise.

WESLEY: Yes it is and that is very much written into out induction and is ratified by a range of accreditations such as Customer First, IIP and the Matrix. So recruitment, induction and then it is about ... well the way we are with people, people are generally quite nice and cooperative and then you can build up that peer support and that has

been the core to who Better Communities is and how we instill those values consistently across the organisation. But it has been a challenge, all it takes is for a couple of staff to break that and that has happened where we have had staff who got wobble and became despondent and caused a rupture. So an example of our passion for the organisation we actually dropped some key bits of work so we could focus back on the team. If you don't focus on your staff and don't make sure they are happy your whole business model falls, it brings it back to my point that your staff are your biggest asset and if you look after your staff and they buy into your organisational values your business model is sound as a result.

ME So, you select accordingly, you induct them and then is there on-going support?

WESLEY: Yes we have regular supervision, annual appraisal, 6month catch up, we are in the process of developing competency frameworks as we realise that we need some level of formality to our governance. I have monthly team meetings that are mandatory as we have a multi-site working team so this is the only time I can really get people together. And these meetings aren't just about me passing on information we make sure we have a broader level of activity, so we often have external presenters come in to talk about the work that they are doing so we can build better links and better trust. I am booked out for the next 15 months in visiting city wide organisations to build those links. Every three months we have a whole organisation meetings which are also mandatory and we hold those off site, these meetings we ask the staff to design and deliver them. This was in response to staff feedback where they were less than happy with communications so we put this over to them and now they pull together the agenda for those days. So we kind of said if you are not happy then over to you, put up or shut up and don't come moaning. And they have embraced it and we have really good attendance. So getting staff involved in those meetings and leading them has helped lots.

ME Do you see a boundary to these stakeholders and partnership? So where do you think Better Communities and your responsibility stops? Or isn't there a boundary?



WESLEY: I think for staff there are boundaries and that is the challenge of being a manager. Within that I have developed my style within my own thought process and as I am now developing senior managers I have had to marry the fact that I am a nice person and I do want to work with you but sometimes I will make a decision and you have to do it. That has been a gradual process with some of the staff I have been managing for about 5 or 6 years, putting those boundaries in place and it has been a softly softly approach, I haven't sat down and said this is what I do and this is what you do. It is fine tuning, so this is around how they manage their staff what they need to be doing in terms of governance it is about how as we grow we bring in different stakeholders. So that they, the staff, are not just workers but they are an advocate of SOAR, so I have done lots of work on relationship building and instilling in them that they are the face of SOAR. So internally that is where we are at and some staff have got on with it and some didn't like it, they have left. Also I have been challenged in my leadership style I have worked my way up from a junior post and it is an iterative thing you are constantly changing and developing and I think that is a strength within Better Communities and the team and we will identify when we do need to change.

In terms of other boundaries and how we work with other organisations we are perceived by some of the small organisations as the big bad Better Communities who takes up all of the money. I don't think we will get away from that and because we run as a business we do get a lot of visibility and we are thought of highly and we do get work as a result. So lots of the work that I and I am doing is partnership development and being really clear about our boundaries and we have to respect these small organisations and if they want some help that is fine and if not we need to be careful about what we say so that we don't cross that boundary. We had a big partnership event of all our partners of which 30 out of 48 attended and we did lots of work there around partnership delivery which included discussions around boundaries and we had some feedback which was all positive. That was that we share the same values as SOAR, we know where we want to go and we want to work together, so that collaborative approach really came across.

ME Are there stakeholders or potential stakeholders that you intentionally don't engage with?

WESLEY: Generally no, because in an environment like this and in this area the stakeholders are pretty static so the CCG (clinical commissioning groups) are a new stakeholder and we work with them on the GP project. Generally the people we don't work with..... well we don't spit our dummy out, we will work with anybody but if they don't fit in with the way we work or if they are disingenuous, as a lot of our work is based on trust, then we won't work with you but we won't make that very apparent we will just let them drift away. It is very rare this occurs. Others I could name are like the larger social landlords, one in particular has grown aggressively, because they have had to due to the changes in the law around renting, so they have had to diversify and have moved into health and social care and they have developed and grown and now see themselves as a charity and have undercut a lot of the people in the region. We worked with them on a project on social prescribing, so they came and looked at our model and we talked them through our experiences and they essentially took all our knowledge and put it in a tender and then got a contract on the back of it. So they simply came in sucked the information from you and then turned it out as their product.

ME That's not very win win is it?

WESLEY: No it isn't. So it is the ethics in question and from their point of view they are a charity and social enterprise so they are very much taking it down a much more private way of running a business which takes it back to the ethics of how you run a business. An example is that now they are back operating in Sheffield and I met with their programme manager for a catch up last week but of course I made sure not to tell him anything about what we were doing, otherwise he would have just sat there taking notes and six months down the line you go to a big partnership meeting and you see your comments up on the screen as someone else's comment. So they are just sucking up market intelligence and using it solely for their own benefit. And that is difficult and of course that all permeates down to staff, so I am constantly saying from

my line I need to do this, form a worker line I don't let my dealings with organisations prejudice your workings with the organisation. So it is all about a fine balance. The council are part of this and they are introducing services within Sheffield that undermine ours so it is quite competitive. So we do try and work together but this is difficult and now the culture in the council has changed it is very much for then to look after themselves now and that brings out the worst in commissioning managers. And they also pay staff on their programmes more than we do and we warned them about this and that if they did this it would change the market and it has.

And of course the social care contracts that I mentioned earlier with G4S and A4E. Yes we have worked with them and they simply cherry pick the easy to do stuff and then it is crumbs of the table for the rest of us.

ME Can you give me an example of a fundamental reason you walked away from those contracts?

WESLEY: Sure, fundamentally it was financial risk. We had to pay all costs of the project up front and then we claim that back from the outcomes that we achieve. But they allocate themselves all the easy to achieve people and leave the more complex people who are furthest away from the labour market so the likelihood of a successful outcome is much lower for us and in the mean time we have paid out on the programme and now can't claim all of those costs back as we don't get good enough success levels with the people that are allocated to us to work with. So I think it was 50:50, that is 50% financial risk and 50% is that the whole model of Better Communities is that anyone can walk through our door and we will support them, but that contract did not allow us to be able to offer that service, which is fundamental to who we are.

ME So values, you mention a few times about your values and how they implicate how you work and where you work. Can I ask in what way, or how do your values implicate your approach to leadership here at Better Communities?

WESLEY: Its about that sense of collaboration. I have a clear vision and I communicate to my managers what I want and I empower them to think this is what I want and these are the outcomes I want for the organisation and I indicate do you think that is right? So the values for me are about empowering staff and having the staff with the skills to do that.

ME Why do you do that then?

WESLEY: From my perspective no matter what you do or who you are you are still an individual within yourself and you have quality that comes out and this manifests itself and as a manager I want to get that little spark out of someone. And if that person is willing to develop themselves I am willing to support them to do that and that is the nub of what it is. From my own experience is that don't package people.

ME So let me ask you again, why do you think it is important to do that?

WESLEY: Because it grows the business it is that entrepreneurial spirit people have really good ideas but they feel constrained by the management structure so if you change that structure and the way of working them hopefully you can draw that out.

ME So what would you say are your underpinning values if it was just about you?

WESLEY: There are lots of different things. It's about integrity, if I say something I will follow it through or if I can't I will say I can't and I will work out a different way and don't think as a manager you can do everything because you can't you need to use your staff. So it's about integrity, collaboration and it's about don't be afraid to fail you learn from your mistakes. And again try to get staff to do the same, have you learnt from it and if so what and this is a quality that my boss has instilled in me, if you bugger up and don't acknowledge it then we need to have a chat if you bugger up and learn from it then I will support you 100%, so failure is OK. And of course within that you need to always be there for your staff and being accessible. And those would be the core values for me.

ME So can I ask you, where do you think those come from? Why do you think you hold those particular values?

WESLEY: One, is down to my boss Ian and his support as a person. He is the CEO and is very much a lefty and is very much a mentor to me and helped me develop. Also a lot of it comes down to my own upbringing as well, it is about my grandpa who was a liberal from the war years and he was very much about having respect for people. It is very much about thinking differently it's about having respect for people and having integrity and it is about having a strong work ethic that I get from my Dad. I am a grafter and I put in the hours. So lots of it is down to my upbringing and the peers that I had as a kid.

Within that I like to stand back reflect and observe and take it all in I think this is a really good trait in a manager.

ME We have chatted about the values of the organisation. How might you describe the values of the staff, are there common values of the staff here?

WESLEY: I think so. Again this links back to our mission and objectives. So our values are collaboration and that is a big thing everyone works together and if you have a member of staff that doesn't want to work with people they are very quickly.... They leave quite quickly, they are not pushed out but they realise quite quickly that this is not for them. And this is challenging as we grown and have remote workers at other organisations but it is still key and that sense of team working and looking out for each other is very strong and we empower our senior workers to keep that moving forward. And I think within our partner organisations that sense of collaboration is good but when there is not much money around we are asked to collaborate but there is not money behind it but because we have built this up over many years we can still do it.

ME From what we have discussed would you be able to identify a responsible leadership act that I could then follow up on and discuss with the people implicated how they saw this act and your leadership within it.

WESLEY: Perhaps my approach to co-production within our partnership work. Where we engage with the beneficiaries from the outset and then build a service with them around their needs. So all our contracts are co-produced, so we have a series of outcomes that we decide and design together over a series of meetings in the project development stage. A good example would be a project in high green where the local community had a lot of suspicion about us, so we came in and spoke very openly about who we are. I led this piece of work as I am good at building relationships, we built trust, I listened to them, I was open about what we could and could not do. What was possible we put in the tender, we shared the tenders before submission, the finance and everything. If you are involved in community development you have to be transparent and build that trust, so we got the tenders and communicate that and needed some staff so set up a recruitment panel with the local people we had been working with and at the end of it they gave me hugs! Which I think is a great way to develop your staff, you work with the local people and involve them right the way through.

ME Who might be appropriate to chat to about this?

WESLEY: Sarah Smith who is the health coordinator on one of the projects for Firvale community hub so she is part of the partnership but not Better Communities staff. She can comment on all aspects of the partnership co-production of the project.

Also Hue Hanson who is on the parish council. I can pass you their details and have a chat with them to let you know about your research. He would be an example of a lay person who volunteers to work with us and has supported the building of the trust with the new partner. He is also chair of a local health network and is quite influential.

I can also send you a copy of the tender docs that will show you what I mean by co-production. If you have a read and need to chat further on it.

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